Role Definition of Principals in Religious Schools

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Abstract

Principals of private religious schools are required to exercise professional and spiritual leadership when facing a complex array of problems on a daily basis. This research study examined the relationships of role description, role complexity or ambiguity, responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours among Christian elementary school principals. Participants examined the actual roles of principals as spiritual, managerial, and educational school leaders as defined in the literature by Ciriello (1998). The intent of this study was to demonstrate the importance of religious school principals in their school organization and wider school community.

This was an exploratory mixed-method qualitative study that used a survey and a series of in-depth interviews. The survey instrument employed closed- and open-ended questions on what issues principals perceived as important, satisfying, difficult, and time-consuming. Profiles were developed for 10 Niagara Christian school principals and their institutions. Three Christian school educators were invited to comment on survey findings using a series of semistructured questions. Common themes that emerged from the survey and interview data were identified.

This study provided rich and descriptive accounts of principals' roles as exemplary school leaders. Varying degrees of role complexity or a

lack of principals' role congruence were noted in all job components although principals held that their roles were balanced, satisfying, and rewarding. The spiritual dimensions of principals' primary responsibilities permeated all other roles and competencies. It was shown that religious school principals projected important images as role models, school, and community leaders. Principals' interstitial roles were further described using the metaphors of principals as shepherds, servant leaders, and visionaries.

This study concluded with the introduction of a Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model. This model depicts how principals' roles are connected to different role-related elements. It is hoped that this study will add to the limited body of research on the religious school movement, principals, and wider school culture. An extensive literature review of Christian elementary school principals was developed for the benefit of future research.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

This study explored the organizational behaviour of principals serving as leaders in religious school communities. The analysis of roles, competencies, and behaviours of religious school principals as they perceive, interpret, and respond to their unique positions in religious school settings is an important, but poorly understood area of educational research. How do these principals perceive their roles? How do the various roles impact on their competencies as school principals? How uniform are roles, role expressions, and role expectations held by principals from a cross-section of different religious schools? This study investigates these questions to reveal the nature of the contributions of school principals as essential constituents in religious school organizations.

This chapter outlines the importance of principals as managerial, educational, and spiritual leaders within religious school organizations. The study's main purpose, sub-purposes, alternate goals, background, significance, and underlying assumptions are described, in addition to outlining barriers to collecting accurate data. This chapter defines key terms and concludes with an outline of the scope of the study.

Roles of Principals in Schools

Principals embody important and essential roles that transcend differences between public, private, parochial, and religious schools. Noted researchers Hughes and Ubben (1978) described the importance of the principalship by commenting that if one

> ...person is to embody the purpose, programs, and atmosphere of a particular school, that person is the principal....The principal is the one person who is directly involved in every aspect of the school's operation ....The efficiency and effectiveness of a school rely directly on the

principal's performance. Outstanding schools have outstanding principals. (p. 1)

Outstanding principals understand their roles as effective school leaders (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998; Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996; Lyons, 1999). Principals that recognize and master key leadership roles can successfully negotiate role-related competencies and responsibilities. As society changes, so do principals' roles. Change is a significant component of principals' roles at all levels. Edwards (2001) captures the essence of change and complexity when commenting that

> The role of the principal is indeed multidimensional. There appears to be a consensus that the roles and responsibilities of a school principal are as multifaceted and complex as the school organization is itself. The responsibilities seem ever evolving and never absolute. (p. ii)

Montgomerie, McIntosh, and Mattson (1988) commented that the role of the principal is defined by "...complexity, multiplicity, ambiguity, and change" (p. 112). Religious school principals' roles are influenced by many variables including the changing expectations of teachers, parents, and students, the shifting paradigms of a secular world and the ever-changing influences of real-world experiences within religious education settings.

Hallinger (1992) commented that the principalship is best understood by using predominant images. These images have slowly evolved as schools have been restructured with the expectation that principals will move from managerial to instructional to transformational leaders. Currently, principals must integrate a variety of role expressions throughout the school year if they are to succeed as school leaders. Principals constantly mediate the ever-increasing demands of colleagues, teachers,

parents, and students. Principals also deal with a full range of administrative and

educational issues throughout the entire school day. In addition, principals are constantly

negotiating their ever-changing roles while performing essential tasks. Langer and Boris-

Schacter (2003) observed that principals negotiated their roles dealing with three pairs of

tension: instructional leadership and management tasks, personal and professional

demands, and principals' roles and community expectations. Successful and effective

principals recognize that principals' roles are created and refined by the community that

envelops their schools. Within this distinct culture, religious school principals strive to

serve as effective school leaders.

The literature indicates that principals are generally satisfied with their position

and status (Andrews, 1995; Hansen, 1984; Johnson, 1988; Johnson & Holdaway, 1991;

Miller, 1979). However, most principals are also aware of the gap between the school

stakeholders' professional expectations of ideal principals and the actual roles principals

perform (Burrow, 1991; Creeden, 1988; Wilson, 1980). Principals are also

knowledgeable about the full range of duties, functions, tasks, and practices necessary to

be effective school leaders (Ranniger, 1962). Principals' job descriptions outline these

competencies, responsibilities, and skills (Duke & Stiggins, 1985; Dunton, 1976).

Principals are also in a position to articulate their roles within their school organization

using any number of role expressions and expectations. Discrepancies sometimes occur

between what are perceived as principals' roles and responsibilities and what actually gets

done on an everyday basis. Indeed, members of the wider school community may have

specific perceptions of a principal's actual, learned, and ideal roles that are inconsistent

with the self-expectations of their own school principal. Roles, whether real or imagined, create powerful and sometimes conflicting images in the collective consciousness of the school community. These roles are shaped by the surrounding school culture and come together to paint colourful portraits of principals. This is equally true of principals serving in religious schools.

The research literature is full of different images of the principalship. In all these representations a common theme emerges with principals pictured as important constituents of their school communities. The evolution of general images to specific role definitions is a complex process that is subject to fluid interpretation. Normative role expressions and expectations, including those that model the principalship are constantly being redefined by the culture in which these roles function. Prototypical organizational models can exhibit a full range of organizational roles and expectations for principals in the performance of their day-to-day responsibilities. However, "In spite of persistent attention from researchers, the role of the school principal remains a poorly understood area of educational leadership" (Castle, Mitchell, & Gupta, 2002, p.23). This study looks carefully at the interrelationship between the culture of the school environment and the leadership roles that principals play. This investigation explores these dynamics within religious school organizations.

Principals serving in public, private, and religious schools share similar problems, opportunities, and expectations (Blair, 1971; Foskett, 1967; Sloan & Del Bene, 1983). Principals are consistently and universally viewed as transformative leaders, effective school managers, and administrative supervisors. Matthews and Crow (2003) identified

key role expectations (and metaphors) describing principals as learners, supervisors, mentors, leaders, managers, politicians, and advocates. Slotting principals' role expectations and expressions into normative role-sets is a challenging exercise. Researchers investigating the ideal roles of public elementary school principals over the past 50 years have developed a varied list of descriptors to depict the roles of effective, successful, or outstanding school principals. A significant number of these role descriptors are relevant for principals serving in religious school organizations. Castle, Mitchell, and Gupta (2002) observed Ontario public school principals' workdays filled with managing, co-ordinating, and performing diverse tasks. Public school principals were described as being highly fragmented, fulfilling many different tasks in limited time frames and experiencing complexity and ambiguity in all roles. However, an important distinction that separates religious school principals from their public and private school counterparts is the role descriptor of principal as spiritual leader.

Religious school principals as spiritual leaders view the principalship not only as a vocation, but as a religious ministry. Assuming the rights, duties, status, and expectations of a spiritual leader presents additional challenges and opportunities. Effective principals as religious school leaders understand (and to some extent successfully negotiate) all role expectations and are aware of the spiritual dimension of their position. This study describes how one specialized group of principals, Christian elementary school principals, perceive their roles.

Background of the Study

My experiences working with administrators, teachers, parents, and students from

a variety of Niagara private Christian elementary schools became a study interest. It was with this interest that I began a 2-year investigation to observe and understand principals serving in Christian elementary schools. This investigation initially involved reading and documenting the secular and religious educational research literature and interviewing researchers and educators affiliated with the Christian school movement throughout Canada and the United States. This background investigation laid the ground-work for the formal part of this study.

The Christian school movement as a growing and international phenomenon is not well documented by secular and religious researchers. Gleason (1980) confirmed this observation when he stated that "...during the past fifteen years the field of education has witnessed the widespread and rapid growth of this movement. Yet recent research had indicated that at present very little is known about it" (p. 3). Reports, studies, articles, and literature describing religious school principals lack breadth and depth, are reflective in nature, and fail to cut across religious affiliations and denominations. The lack of a significant and current body of research on the social roles of religious school principals creates an artificial barrier for researchers interested in private religious school education and for principals aspiring to become effective leaders. This study adds to this body of research.

The roles that a religious school principal must play, or that many school principals believe they must play, are complex and demanding. Paul Young (1998) as a former Christian school principal reflected on the complexity, detail, and ever-changing nature of his role as a principal noting that

The expectations of Christian school administrators are as varied as the public we serve. In my early years of ministry, I was frustrated in trying to identify who I really was. I felt at times that I was expected to be a curriculum specialist, child psychologist, accountant, lawyer, master teacher, marriage counselor, referee, private eye, architect, policeman, diplomat, politician, preacher, painter, public relations specialist, labor and contract negotiator, and janitor. I needed to be a specialist in preschool and early childhood education, elementary, middle school, and secondary education and a multimedia expert on the cutting edge of technology. I was expected to be the first one at school and the last to leave. I felt I should attend every church service and, to set an example, weekly visitation. I felt I was expected to teach Sunday school and lead a small group, attend every ball game, band concert, play, and PTF (Parent Teacher Family) [sic] meeting. In addition, I should not neglect my own family. (p. 1)

Principals who know their evolving and changing roles understand their status and position within their schools' organization. These principals as school leaders can articulate a clear vision for their school in the midst of complexity. Effective principals can establish with greater certainty personal and organizational priorities and goals.

According to the precepts of role theory

Roles are associated with social positions -- such as principal -- that constitute forms of identity and fulfil established functions within the group. They designate a commonly recognized set of persons, and each role incumbent is expected to behave in characteristic ways that define the role. (Sybouts & Wendel, 1994, p. 126)

Effective or transformative religious school principals utilize essential competencies to successfully negotiate their roles, responsibilities, and associated behaviours.

Role, according to Biddle (1979), describes what principals do, gives direction to what is important, and articulates how principals are to position themselves within an educational community. Understanding one's role involves knowledge of one's position, expectations, and purpose. The study of religious school principals, the organizations in which they serve, and their surrounding community is important to all members of the

educational community. Religious school principals' work environments assume many of the same characteristics as private, parochial, and public school organizations. A religious school principal is perceived to be an entrepreneur, promoter, business person, pastor, missionary, administrator, educator, and school manager. Religious school principals multitask many roles. In addition to the typical pieces of a principal's job, there is a spiritual dimension to a religious school principal's position.

The basis for changing and improving principals' performance begins with an understanding of their own perspective and how it fits into the larger educational organizational matrix called school. School principals have the responsibility to build, manage, and maintain a school organization. In addition, religious school principals are positioned as school leaders by a spiritual mandate. All principals could benefit from research that accurately describes the roles of exemplary or outstanding religious school principals. Describing religious school principals' ideal or normative roles could be of assistance to new, ineffective, or struggling principals. Investigating religious school principals' ideal roles may also be a first step towards developing normative standards or proficiencies. Ultimately, this descriptive and exploratory study is a personal investigation of how religious school principals see their world and make sense of it.

Researching the private religious school movement is fraught with difficulties. A significant difficulty for researchers is gaining the trust of the wider religious school community to collect real and accurate data. A lack of trust presents a serious challenge and a barrier to researchers wanting to gain further knowledge and understanding. Having developed a rapport with many Christian school principals, administrators, and parents

during the preliminary investigation, I was in an excellent position to meet principals on their own turf, speak their language, and use their frames of reference. I felt somewhat empowered and in a position of trust to work directly with researchers, educators, principals, their schools, and members of the wider Christian school community. This study provided a unique opportunity to begin a successful dialogue with religious school principals to collect difficult-to-get data. As a practicing Christian I was in an excellent position to understand and interpret in a limited way what it meant to be a Christian serving in the principalship while understanding full well the importance of guarding against an obvious bias.

The Niagara Region's 15 Christian schools represent a broad cross-section of Christian school organizations and associations. Some Niagara Christian schools are independent, others are church or denomination-affiliated, while others are associated with larger provincial and international Christian school organizations. Niagara Christian schools represent a diverse range of schools, organizational structures, educational philosophies, and principals. This study presented an opportunity to investigate principals' roles within a cross-section of different religious schools, settings, and cultures to find commonalities and differences. As an outsider looking in, I was in an excellent position to pursue research amongst a small, yet diverse range of principals in a knowledgeable, yet objective way. Substantive questions worthy of study during the investigation included: How might religious school principals describe the perfect principal's role-set? How would these roles be described? In what areas is there evidence of role complexity or ambiguity? How might these discrepancies manifest themselves?

What are the consequences? What could be the remedies?

The pursuit of excellence in all organizations is a desirable goal. Effective school leaders who know their position or status and can portray important role-sets within their respective organizations are likely to be effective (Orton, 1992). An overall goal of this study is to gain an understanding of what religious school principals' sense of their role is in theory and in practice.

Robert Owens (1998) commented on how the study of principals within an educational organization is also a study of a distinct culture when he stated that

> A school is a world in which people live and work. Like any other social organization the world of the school has power, structure, logic, and values, which combine to exert strong influence on the ways in which individuals perceive the world, interpret it, and respond to it. In short, the behavior of people at work in an educational organization -- individually as well as a group -- is not merely a reflection of their idiosyncratic personalities but is influenced, if not defined, by the social norms and expectations of the culture that prevail in the organization. This interplay between individuals and the social environment of their world of work is powerful in giving rise to organizational behavior, which means the behavior of people in the school organization. (p. xvii)

Effective principals understand their roles in the larger social and cultural system of school organizations. Principals also understand the role expectations of individual stakeholders within their school community. From a social psychological perspective, principals recognize ideal role behaviours. Successful principals maximize the opportunities to portray ideal role attributes when focusing on role-learning, role-taking, and role-playing in the performance of their jobs. Religious school principals recognize the influence of school culture on their roles as school leaders. This research of religious elementary school principals and their schools was a personal journey that illuminated the

importance of principals and what they found to be important, satisfying, time-

consuming, and difficult. Ultimately, this study reflected not only on religious principals'

roles, but on the unique educational culture in which they serve.

Religious schools as private educational organizations have a specific mission to

educate their students within a religious community. Principals within religious schools

play an important role in realizing this mission. One Niagara Christian school's

promotional literature articulates this mission:

> We strive to maintain the highest standards possible, encouraging students
> to be good stewards of their God-given talents and to maintain an
> atmosphere of Christian love and discipline. We aim to prepare our
> students to become concerned and active citizens of the Kingdom of God
> and of their country. The ties between Home, School, Church are closely
> maintained. (Niagara Christian School, 2003, p. 2)

Principals working in religious school settings have a strong sense of their

ministry, school constituents, culture, and surrounding community. This has been

documented by studies of Christian school principals (Coles-Rivers, 1989; Lowrie, 1984;

McAuliffe, 1985) and Christian schools (Carper, 1984; Heckman, 1991; Van Brummelen,

1989). Principals' roles and responsibilities have also been documented within

administrative manuals and handbooks published by researchers and administrators

affiliated with the Christian school movement (Demuth & Demuth, 1995a; Elve, 1982;

Evearitt, 1996; Powers, 1996). These resources too often simply list and enumerate

principals' essential roles, responsibilities, tasks, and functions. In this study, I attempted

to rank, describe, and evaluate essential role elements by asking religious school

principals to articulate what they thought was important and meaningful. This study

builds upon limited existing research to accurately describe religious school principals'

primary roles and the culture in which they serve.

Assumptions of the Study

This exploratory paper assumes that the school is a social organization comprised of various interrelated groups. Individuals and groups within this organization are expected to function according to roles assigned to their status and position. Religious school principals conform to socially constructed secular and religious normals defined within and by the many facets of this culture. The basis of this study focused upon the following series of questions surrounding the principal's position within an array of different role expectations: How do principals in religious elementary schools perceive the importance of their actual roles and related responsibilities? How are these roles expressed within their organizational and educational settings? How do principals derive a knowledge or understanding of their educational, managerial, and spiritual roles? How do individual principals make sense when ideal, learned, or actual roles conflict with day-to-day tasks, duties, functions, and responsibilities? How is meaning derived from these roles?

Purposes

The main purpose of this study was to describe how principals serving in religious private schools define the importance of their actual roles and responsibilities. I, as researcher, asked principals from a cross-section of different Christian schools to reflect on the importance of their actual roles, responsibilities, and related behaviours. Experts familiar with the Christian school movement were asked to validate and comment on survey results by responding to a series of semistructured interview questions. All data generated from the survey and transcripts of interviews were analyzed for common

themes.

Subpurposes of this study were threefold. The first subpurpose was to identify what principals in religious schools identified as satisfying, time-consuming, and difficult in their function as important role models. The study also investigated the frequency of principals' role-related behaviours. The second subpurpose was to identify the occurrence of role complexity, ambiguity, or incongruence introduced into the principalship by an imbalance and/or overlapping of different role elements. Role complexity, as perceived by principals themselves, was defined as a lack of role congruence between ideal and actual role elements. The third subpurpose was to depict a model that described religious school principals' different role elements. The completion of this study required the investigation of the following alternate goals:

- The determination of the background biographical characteristics of principals serving in Niagara's private Christian elementary schools.

- The determination of the background characteristics and culture of Niagara's private Christian elementary schools.

- The description and listing of actual (operational) and expected (posted) role functions of religious school principals with implications for the practice of the principalship.

- The isolation of correlates of the religious school principals' professional practice from schools representing a cross-section of Christian school associations, denominations, and educational settings.

- The examination of the nature and consequences of role complexity as expressed

by role strain and role ambiguity.

- The assessment of a modified survey instrument used to capture principals' roles, related areas of responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours within a religious school setting.

- The investigation of the suitability of different data-gathering techniques as a means to collect difficult data from a relatively closed community.

- The creation of a forum for the discussion, evaluation, and presentation of religious elementary school models of actual and ideal role behaviours.

- The involvement of religious school experts as educators, researchers, and administrators reflecting on the actual roles of principals as leaders within school organizations.

Significance of the Study

The number, size, and geographic distribution of religious schools has exhibited significant international growth since the 1950s (Cooper & Gargen, 1996; Henke, Choy, & Geis, 1996; Sweet, 1997; Thiessen, 1997; Watson & MacKenzie, 1996). Researchers within and outside the religious school movement have only recently started to explore this unique area of education. Formally, very few peer-reviewed studies were identified that researched the roles of private religious school principals from the perspective of practicing principals.

This study sets a framework with which to pursue further research on role clarification, role congruence, and the development of normative role behaviours within religious school organizations. Images, pictures, and knowledge derived from this

research may help to facilitate role clarification for principals, and other members of the religious school community. This study may also benefit principals who aspire to improve their schools. Religious school teachers, parents, and students may be challenged and changed by observing effective best practices of mature principals who understand their roles, responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours. This paper has possible implications for principals, school administrators, board members, teachers, parents who place their children in private religious schools, and those individuals involved with public education who are watching the religious school movement. This investigation may also prove useful for public school principals who, while possibly disagreeing with religious schools' social and spiritual goals, may nevertheless gain a greater insight and understanding of religious schools as bona fide educational communities with legitimate roles, responsibilities, and purposes.

Research has recognized that culture plays an important role in knitting a community together (Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Leonard, 1999; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1986, 1994). Religious schools are many and varied, but are all characterized by a strong religious or faith-centered purpose and mission. Numerous studies have commented that religious faith penetrates everything in religious schools and by doing so deepens a sense of coherence and meaning, a foundation of values, and a code of behaviour (Bradley, 1998; Deuink, 1996c; Greene, 1997; Short, 2002). Principals as leaders within this community play a significant role in developing and nurturing this sense of faith, spirituality, and school culture. Through this study, I attempted, in a small way, to understand not only those who choose to serve, work, and minister in religious

schools, but also the culture that surrounds the entire school community.

There are many real benefits resulting from this study. Participants will receive a descriptive summary of survey results. All principals when reviewing both preliminary data and the completed study will be able to reflect on their personal roles and professional practices. Principals from different religious schools may have a unique opportunity to share different perspectives and experiences. Discussions resulting from the study may reaffirm an individual principal's personal philosophies of education, ministry, roles, areas of responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours. Principals may also be able to identify areas of potential and real role conflict, complexity, and ambiguity. It is anticipated that principals as a result of their involvement in the study will be better informed about their role and status as school leaders. The societal benefits derived, besides the personal growth and development of the primary investigator, include the documenting of religious school principals' narratives when discussing their managerial, educational, and spiritual roles. It is anticipated that this study could in a small way fill a hole in the research literature.

Principals occupy essential and pivotal positions within all schools, but especially within religious schools. Religious school principals portray an additional role of *spiritual leader*. This spiritual role is paramount of importance to the school, surrounding community, and culture.

Principals are in a unique position to observe and comment on their own roles and their insights as insiders and experts. In addition, they are in a position to reflect on changing roles at the very site where change is being implemented. Describing what

principals actually do, what they want to do, and what they feel they are supposed to do is critical to understanding principals' roles as leaders within any school community. Exploring principals' roles may identify role elements that are time-consuming, difficult, important, and satisfying. This may assist in the identification of areas of role complexity. Exploring these themes is an important step towards understanding the culture in which principals serve. The development of a model that depicts role-related organizational elements may assist future researchers by describing and defining the dynamics of principals serving in religious school communities. The model could be used as a basis to describe the organizational behaviour of principals serving as leaders in religious school communities.

This paper was designed as an exploratory study within this unique area of education. It is to be hoped that the findings and data from this study will be of assistance to principals serving in religious schools as well as provide an impetus for further research.

Barriers to Research

The lack of a significant body of research investigating the religious school movement, school organization, and their principals is the result of a variety of factors. Administrators within religious school organizations are driven by mandates that do not normally promote the scholarly practice of educational research, investigation, and publishing. Principals and administrators are constantly consumed by other more important activities including supervising, evaluating, writing and revising curriculum, organizing an endless series of meetings, promoting, training, teaching, and keeping

abreast of new developments. Although the religious school movement has been in place for some time, it has always lacked a body of researchers to investigate important educational issues. Typically, religious school principals carry a substantial workload and are shielded by administrative support staff. They have little inclination or incentive to participate in a study which purported to analyze their roles in a meaningful manner. With this in mind, it was determined that an effective research design should incorporate a varied combination of different research methodologies, but all within a qualitative paradigm.

Religious school principals, administrators, and superintendents, similar to public school principals, have a great number of professional, public, family, personal, and church-related interests. Principals are in the best position to describe and document their roles. However, religious school principals attempting to lead balanced lives rarely find the time or energy to take on the additional role of principal or administrator as researcher.

The religious school movement understands its role as a private, unique, and independent culture, separate from worldly influences. Although obliged to follow the laws of the land, most religious schools fervently believe in the separation of church and state. As a distinct and somewhat separate community, there are very few inside voices willing to openly reflect upon school-related philosophical, spiritual, and educational issues. This is especially true of leaders within these communities including administrators, headmasters, and principals. From an outside researcher's perspective it is difficult to gain the confidence and trust of religious schools' principals.

Religious school principals are under great pressures to conform to a vast number of religious or faith-based distinctives. These distinctives are centered on evangelism, fellowship, worship, ministry, and discipleship activities. Pressures to conform come from colleagues, parents, educators, administrators, and members of the wider religious community. Principals acting as critical thinkers exploring fundamental, philosophical, social, and most importantly, educational issues open themselves to secular advice and criticism.

The vast majority of secular and religious education researchers are hesitant to explore research themes within religious, church and fundamentalist-based educational movements thereby creating a barrier to future research.

Definition of Terms

Conceptual or substantive assumptions used in this study including the functional definition of role-related terms and phrases, are defined consistently across all religious school settings. This includes the interpretation and actualization of different religious doctrines, beliefs, and practices that transcend all religious school beliefs, values, activities and personnel. This work did not define any language, terms, or phrases used during the data collection, resulting discussion, analysis and presentation of results. The following terms used within the Christian school movement are defined to assist the reader in understanding the contextual meaning of key concepts and images.

Christian

There are many competing definitions of common terms, including what it means to be Christian. A Christian believes that there is a God and that the Bible is God's word.

His word in inherently true and these absolute truths are revealed through Jesus, that we can know Jesus as God, who has a plan for our lives (Ephesians 1:9,11; John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3,4). "Above all historical, sociological, and literary applications, Christianity focuses primarily on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ" (Gangel, 2001, p. 138). An overwhelming majority of members of the Christian school movement would strongly agree with this biblically-based definition of what it means to be a Christian.

Christians ministering, working, serving, and supporting the Christian school movement are stereotypically described as evangelical, conservative, and Bible-believing. However, there continues to be some ambiguity as to the doctrinal and operational definition of what it means to be a Christian within different Christian school communities. For the purpose of this study, *Christian* is defined by individual members of each school and church community.

Christian Education

The goals of Christian education are varied. Christian education is substantially more than education delivered within a Christian context and culture. Historically, Christian education has been used to describe everything from catechisms through to Bible studies and Sunday school programs. Christian education within the Christian school movement subscribes to a deeper, more developed and a scripturally-based definition. Christian education is a "...process of personal, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual, physical and social growth with the accompanying development of knowledge, skill, activity or character by teaching, training, study or self-directed learning experiences" (Cunningham & Fortosis, 1987, p. 159). Christian education involves a

belief and values system that envelops the entire school community, encompassing goals,

decisions, and actions that are based on Scripture, grounded in faith, and guided by God

as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Christian education is more than

> ...just teaching about the Bible and that secular subjects can be taught from
> a Christian perspective. There is a difference, however, because of the role
> of the Holy Spirit in Christian education. Through the illumination of the
> Holy Spirit, believers are shown the truth of God's Word, and this is not
> present in secular education. Both secular and Christian educators may use
> similar methodologies, but this does not make them the same. Christian
> education is indeed unique because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
> (Williams, 2001, pp. 132-133)

For the purpose of this study *Christian education* pertains to all educational activities

within the Christian school proper.

Christian Schools

> The Christian school, as an enterprise of the entire community, enables
> and equips all of its children to serve the Lord, to love their fellow human
> beings, and to care for God's creation. The school community provides an
> environment of love and care within which students are nurtured. As an
> indispensable partner with the home and the church, the Christian school
> leads children to live according to biblical wisdom. (Vryhof, 2002, p. 110)

Christian schools are private religious schools that teach all subjects and conduct

all activities from a Christian education perspective. In many ways, Christian schools are

very similar to public schools, but there are important differences. Religious private

schools in Ontario do not receive government funding, are self-regulated, and are

governed by a church or religious school board. Approximately five percent of all

elementary schools in the Province of Ontario are private Christian schools, yet these

schools represent less than two percent of all elementary school-aged children (Ontario

Ministry of Education, 2001). Most private Christian schools in Ontario are affiliated

with a regional or international Christian school organization. Yet, a significant number of Christian schools are independent and are administered as autonomous bodies. What sets Christian schools apart from other public and private schools is their strong sense of commitment to spiritual values, biblical principles, and a growing Christian community. A hallmark of Ontario Christian private schools and their principals is their relative independence from provincial legislation and regulation.

For the purpose of this study, Christian schools within the Niagara Region are identified by the Directory of Private Elementary and Secondary Schools Directory (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). Roman Catholic schools, although grounded in Christian values, are not designated as private (and indirectly as Christian schools) by the Ontario government, and as such are not included in this study.

Principals

Principal is a title given to one individual as the head teacher, chief executive, or administrative officer of a private or public elementary, middle, or secondary school. Public and Roman Catholic (or Separate) school principals' responsibilities are legislated by Section 265 of the *Ontario Education Act* (Ontario Education Act, 1990) and associated regulations. The title of principal, administrator, and headmaster are often used interchangeably within religious private schools. A complete copy of legislated responsibilities for Ontario principals is included in Appendix A. These responsibilities include the overall organization and management of individual schools and responsibility for the quality of instruction at their school.

Principals serving in Ontario's private religious schools are usually, but not

necessarily, former teachers, may have some level of postsecondary education, are

appointed by a local school or church board, and are typically contractual employees.

Principals' salaries are contingent upon the size of their school, and as a condition of

employment, principals may be assigned additional teaching responsibilities. Religious

school principals usually hold full-time positions, but a significant number of principals

derive an income from sources extraneous to the school organization. Principals' terms of

employment often encompass the following: Their salaries are lower than those of public

school principals; they assume a multitude of unique roles; they are pushed and pulled in

many different directions; they struggle with competing deadlines and balancing budgets;

and they are constantly trying to balance their church, work, and family life.

Religious school principals assume important roles, responsibilities, and

competencies as managerial, educational, and spiritual school leaders. For the purpose of

this study, all religious school principals serving in Niagara Christian elementary schools

are considered equal. Principals are not differentiated as to their gender, length of service,

employment status, or by their school's religious, denominational, or educational

affiliations.

Social Role Theory

Social role theory was developed in the early 1930s as a method for describing

> ...the functions assigned or adopted by an individual in a social structure.
> The set of behaviors expected of a person possessing a certain social
> status, a pattern of behavior appropriate for a particular situation or status.
> A social-psychological concept where role and personality are sometimes
> used interchangeably, role focuses on position or status in a social
> structure and not on shifts in personality. (Corsini, 1999, p. 850)

According to social role theory, people understand one another and their social

status or position because they enact prescribed roles. Ideal roles are described as the shared or collective thoughts of an organization or community. They prescribe how people are to act, behave, dress, speak, etc. Roles are collective images based on a normative pattern of people's behaviours. Roles are linked to official positions and offices within social organizations that have been given the mandate to carry out specific functions of the organization.

All members of any organization perceive different role expressions attached to a specific position. Together, varied role expectations and expressions are grouped together as normative or ideal roles. These roles give individuals within recognized positions status and power. Normative roles are attached to positions within an organization and not individuals. Actual roles, whether perceived or learned, ultimately emanate from people and their surrounding organizational culture.

This research paper does not attempt to validate the use of role theory within a wider context of psycho-social theories. This study does not argue the merit or suitability of social role theory as a means to explain complex interactions. Although social role theory has its critics, it is a mechanism that allows researchers entry into social organizations to observe, describe, and analyze people with unique and important social positions.

The term *role* as defined by the proponents of social role theory is too often applied inconsistently across the research and educational literature. Principals' roles are understood as collective nouns. Roles, functions, competencies, duties, etc. are at times applied incorrectly and interchangeably. Figure 1 outlines how the term *role* is used in
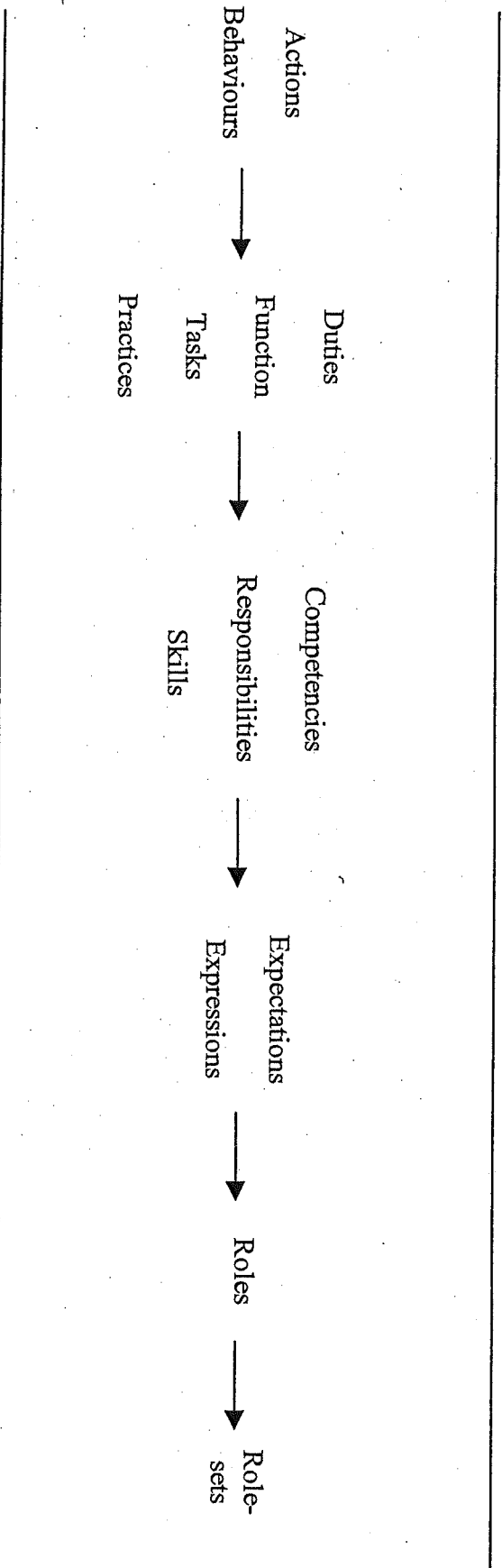
Figure 1. Social role theory classification of terms.

this study. I have attempted to use role-related terms in a consistent and accurate manner.

Religious School Principals' Roles

> ...the ultimate measure of his leadership was to be found in the quality and authenticity of his servant-hood. And so it is with the Christian leader in schools. While trying to gain all of the qualities and exercise all of the skills of management and leadership to the highest possible degree, the ultimate quality of our educational leadership as Christians will not be measured by these things, but by our authenticity and our service of others. (Sharpe, 2000, p. 36)

Defining the normative social roles, functions, duties, responsibilities, tasks, and common practices of school principals is a daunting responsibility. Religious school principals retain roles that are equally important and diverse as their public and private school counterparts. Their roles are constantly evolving and are equally affected by the changing social environment. In addition to managerial or administrative and educational leadership roles, researchers have attributed religious school principals with the unique role as spiritual leaders (Ciriello, 1998; Compagnone, 1999; Dreliszak, 2000; Kralemann, 1993; Moore, 1999; O'Hara, 2000; Stueber, 2000). The role of spiritual leader involves many unique competencies and associated responsibilities. Christian school principals are often described as *ministering* in the execution of their spiritual roles. This term reflects the importance of the spiritual dimension of religious school principals' role-set. Ciriello (1998) defined Catholic school principals' primary role-set using the three distinctive roles of principals as managerial, educational, and spiritual leaders. Each of these roles is defined by a range of competencies and responsibilities. In this study, I used Ciriello's (1998) principal role-set as a basis to define, describe, and understand the roles of

principals serving in Niagara's religious Christian schools.

Scope of the Study

This work was designed to involve a selected group of school principals serving in Christian elementary schools within close proximity to one another in the Niagara Region of Ontario, Canada. A convenience sample of Niagara principals was used to increase the likelihood of participants agreeing to participate in a proposed follow-up focus group meeting to have been held within the Region. Data were collected from a survey instrument and interviews with recognized Christian education experts. This model was created to collect descriptive data from different levels and many sources. Data from all sources were collected and analyzed for trends and patterns.

This study used an exploratory mixed-method descriptive research design. This design helped to gain a full range of comments, opinions, and perceptions on the roles, responsibilities, and behaviours of participating principals. The mixed methodology increased the number and variety of mechanisms for collecting data from a small and diverse population. The scope of the study involved approximately 100 contacts during the preliminary investigation phase and fewer than 25 participants during the formal phase of this study.

Outline of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the study's background, purpose, definition of selected terms, significance, and methodological scope. This chapter concludes with an investigation of social role theory as it pertains to principals' spiritual roles. Religious school principals are examined as managerial, educational, and spiritual

leaders. Attention is given to the suitability of social role theory to analyze principals'

roles with attention to implications for further research. Chapter 2 examines the literature

specific to social role theory, elementary school principals, religious school settings, and

specifically the roles of principals serving in these schools. Chapter 3 describes in detail

the methodology employed to create, analyze, and interpret data from a survey and a

series of expert interviews. Chapter 4 presents the findings of data, emergent themes, and

supporting comments of participants. Chapter 5 reviews the underlying themes, of this

study and discusses the findings with attention to understanding religious school

principals. Chapter 5 introduces a model that describes religious school principals'

interconnected social roles, responsibilities, and organizational community.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the educational and religious literature to investigate how religious school principals define and describe their roles as school leaders. Research is identified that illuminates religious school principals' roles as perceived by principals, educators, researchers, and members of the wider religious school community. Religious school principals are described as exemplary spiritual or faith-based leaders that assume complementary managerial and educational roles. Literature is reviewed that documents the development of the principalship, role complexity, and social role theory. This chapter also reviews the progress of the Christian school movement and describes the organizational structure and culture of Christian religious schools.

Role Expectations of Religious School Principals

> In brief, I certainly think that role orientation is useful for thinking about what principals do, might do, and should be doing in various types of schools (including Christian Elementary Schools).
> (Bruce Biddle, personal communication, February 2, 2002)

I, as principal investigator, invited influential Christian school administrators, educators, and principals not connected to this formal study to comment on what they perceived as the primary role of religious school principals. A selected number of responses are included as Appendix B. Many of the responses portrayed principals fulfilling the role of a spiritual school leader.

> As a spiritual leader and one who loves and understands young children, the primary role of the elementary principal is to possess and demonstrate both managerial and visionary qualities in order to promote a positive, safe and comprehensive learning community, thoroughly enriched by the person of Jesus Christ and the Bible. (David Hegedus, personal communication, January 9, 2002)

A significant number of responses included references to religious school principals' roles as educational and instructional leaders dealing with curriculum and learning-related responsibilities throughout the entire school year.

> As an instructional leader, the elementary school principal needs to be approachable, willing to listen, and have a discerning heart ...helping the faculty work as a team, each person contributing ideas and their own strengths. It involves the utilization of the Matthew 18 principle of addressing concerns directly to try to resolve issues in a biblical way. An instructional leader is responsible for evaluating the members of the faculty and helping teachers strengthen their classroom skills. It means being a "cheerleader" and a facilitator for those who are instructing the students, assisting them to do the very best job of educating the students in a manner which is glorifying to the Lord. (Joyce K. Marcy, personal communication, February 25, 2002)

Some responses included references to religious school principals' roles as managerial or administrative leaders dealing with financial, managerial, personnel-related, and staffing responsibilities on a daily basis.

> The primary role(s) of a principal in a Christian elementary school setting is to implement the vision and mission of Christian education as broadly defined by the school board and membership....Keeping the entire education enterprise focused on the vision (the Christian principles that are the "raison d'etre" and are the driving force for development) and ensuring that the key functions actually are in sync with the vision, these are the prime concerns of the principal....The role is complex, but being excited about and believing in the vision, and its practical and daily implementation, is part of my joy and service to God as I exercise the role of the principal. (Jim Vreugdenhint, personal communication, February 8, 2002)

Principals within religious school communities fulfil a vast array of responsibilities, duties, functions, and behaviours. Ciriello (1998) studying Catholic school principals defined this role-set to include the roles of *managerial, administrative,* and *spiritual* school leaders.

Both Owens (1998) and Sergiovanni (1987) noted that schools with shared religious and spiritual values offer a strong sense of coherence and meaning, a foundation of values and a code of behaviour not necessarily found in public schools. It is within this context that religious school principals observe, learn, develop, refine and negotiate their leadership roles. This study builds upon Ciriello's (1998) principal role-set as a basis to describe and understand principals serving in private elementary religious schools.

Leadership Roles

> The principal cannot help but communicate his values system as he reacts and interacts with students, parents, teachers, and so forth, in and out of the school. Highly impressionable students will imbide and accept the Principal's values or...reject the Principal and, tragically, the truth as well. (Balik, 1996, p. 33)

> Religious school principals, by the nature of their position, assume important

leadership roles. These roles are observed within the school community through a varied series of role expectation and expressions. Principals serve and minister in religious schools in a dynamic, engaged, and occupied manner. Teaching, administrative, managerial, and educational duties take a disproportionate amount of time, energy, and resources. A religious school principal's working day incorporates many leadership responsibilities, expectations, competencies, and associated behaviours. A typical day may involve:

> I got up at 5:00 a.m., Lord. I made it to the school by 6:30. I had a quiet 35 minutes to prepare -- including my short talk with You. Thanks, Lord. At a little past seven, one of my two colleagues came in to talk. How can I help her? By 7:30, the three of us had worship and reviewed the day's activities and duties. By 8:15, the rush was on! It continued unrelentingly until 4:00 p.m., when I had a break to prepare for the board meeting tonight. I made copies for everyone, including those long minutes by Mrs. "I" and the agenda. I decided to eat my soggy sandwich while preparing for classes

tomorrow. Guess who walked in early? The board representative....Oh well, so much for the well-prepared agenda. Did I make it to the rest room more than once today? I'm so tired, ...can I drive home without falling asleep? Got home at 11:00 p.m. after closing the school. The house was dark and quiet. The cat was begging to be fed. Lord, why did the board spend so much time deciding what to do about the copier? Help me, Lord. I must be ready for the kids in the morning. I have to teach well. Yours truly, One of the Best Teaching Principals You've Got!" (Havens, 1999, p. 24)

Principals ministering in religious schools assume many of the same role expectations as principals serving in public, private, parochial, and other school organizations. Kulmatycki and Montgomerie (1993) and Kinnaman (1983), studying Catholic and non-Catholic school principals, observed that principals from both parochial and public school settings generally agreed on preferred or expected leadership roles. Principals universally manage, administer, serve, and most importantly, lead. Role expectations common to all principals and documented within religious school settings included principals as transformational (Basile,1988; Hedges, 1998; Laffan, 1998; Sharpe, 2000), cultural, and symbolic leaders (Helm, 1989). Religious school principals have been studied as community builders (Andersen, 1990; Huling, 2002), policy administrators (Van Wieren, 2001), cheerleaders (Dietrich, 1997), instructional supervisors (Brown, 1982; Maggard, 1994; Still, 1977; Williams, 1969), curriculum developers (Brubaker, 1980a; de Leeuw, 1991), staff developers (Brown, 1982; Helmus, 1995), and general administrators (Brubaker, 1980b; Hall, 1978; Melba, 1997; Walmer, 1974). Studies of religious school organizations included the exploration of principals as: school supervisors (Niebergall, 1979, 1980), financial officers (Rogalski, 1997), teachers (Bresemann, 1995; Havens, 1999; Young, 1999), facilitators (Boyd, 1997), school leaders

(Henry, 1989; MacKinnon, 1993; McCormick, 1985; Mims, 1983; Simmons, 1996), change agents (Bell, 1995; Torenvliet, 1995), and those conducting discipleship (Carswell, 1995). These studies describe religious school principals in varied leadership roles. In what ways, religious school principals bring meaning and understanding to these role expectations is not well documented. How role complexity and incongruence is recognized, resolved, and expressed by principals within religious schools is also not well understood. In what ways, this culture shapes Christian school principals' perceived, learned, and actual leadership roles has not been studied and is generally unknown.

Christian school principals, from my personal observations, were recognized as mature Christians, and passionate about their roles, status, and position within their school communities. Religious school principals assume important roles, yet the educational and religious literature fails to incorporate how principals themselves defined their actual roles. Carolyn Sims (2002) commented on Thomas Sergiovanni's (1996) thought that

> ...education is on a different plane than any other model of organization. It is more than a business. It is deeper than a job. It involves people at their best and most noble engaging in tasks beyond that which can be measured and accomplishing together what no one could ever do alone. (p. 95)

Sims contrasted Sergiovanni's model of servant and moral leadership based on social organizational goals with those observed within religious schools. Sims commented:

> Clearly, moral and servant leadership is more than a commitment to moral principles. Teachers and principals [*sic*] in Christian schools are called to serve there and see themselves as a part of the total mission and ministry of the Church ...are based on common core values of adherence to God's Word and to the love He directs us to share with others....While Sergiovanni looks to humanistic ideals, Lutheran educators realize that the power to establish such communities comes from God. (pp. 97-99)

Studies of religious school principals documenting the occurrence and abilities to lead their schools are limited in number and quality. However, a significant number of these studies emphasized the spiritual dimension of principals' roles to the exclusion of all other role elements.

In summary, religious school principals' leadership expectations are as varied as public school principals, yet incorporate a religious or spiritual dimension consistent with the expectations of the wider school organization and community.

Spiritual Roles

> The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion.
> (Stott, 1984, pp. 328-329)

Elve (1982), studying religious school administrators, commented that the "...two most crucial areas of an administrator's expertise concern leadership in the spiritual dimensions of the school and in the areas of human relationships" (p. 15). Paramount among these expectations is the importance of principals as spiritual leaders.

> The Christian school is established for a specific purpose. Parents give their money and send their children to the Christian school because they want their children to have a God-centered education. They entrust the principal and the staff with the task of providing the child with a biblical view of the world and of life. The Administrator is charged by the school board and the parents to see that the teaching in and the climate of the school conform to the spiritual values of the parents. Fulfillment of the main purpose of the Christian school depends to a great extent on the spiritual leadership of the administrator. The staff will look to him or her for the necessary spiritual leadership which places Christ's stamp upon the school, it teaching, and its students....Much is expected and much is required of any person placed in charge of the education of our children. It takes a dedicated person to be a successful Christian-school administrator. (pp. 15-16)

Research studies describing religious school principals as spiritual leaders

included studies of principals as religious leaders (Cappel, 1989; Drahmann, 1989; Gorman, 1989; Ryan, 1997), ministers (Calvert, 1996), school leaders (Indrisano, 1989) and principals as teachers of teachers (Perri, 1989). Studies of Catholic school principals' spiritual roles commented on principals' values (Harkins, 1993), essential competencies (Mills, 1992), role expectations (Kealey, 1989) and operational definitions (O'Hara, 2000). These studies in addition to Ciriello's (1998) study, titled *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders,* developed a profile of various spiritual roles and responsibilities intrinsic to the work of the principal. Ciriello grounds all leadership competencies within a spiritual frame of reference when stating that "...faith development must be recognized as central, rather than peripheral" (Ciriello, 1996, p. 3).

Ciriello's (1996, 1998) studies were used as a basis for this study when I was investigating the complex roles of principals ministering in religious school organizations. This study used Ciriello's role-set to define religious school principals' spiritual roles through the leadership responsibilities for faith development, building community, moral, and ethical formation and development, and familiarity with the history and philosophy of their schools.

The profile of religious school principals as spiritual leaders within religious school organizations has been documented by a few studies mainly investigating Catholic school principals (Cappel, 1989; Compagnone,1999; Drahmann,1989; Gilroy, 1998; Gorman, 1989; Kealey, 1989; Kralemann, 1993; Young, 1998). Similar works have investigated religious school principals as faith leaders (Hines, 1998; Kralemann, 1993; Wallace, 1995, 2000; Wallace, Ridenour & Biddle, 1999), gatekeepers (Massey, 1982),

missionaries (Giambri, 2003), master teachers (Jehle, 1982), prophets (Hennessy & O'Brien, 1983), and servant leaders (Bowdon, 1998; Dunbebin, 1999; Knicker, 1998; O'Hara, 2000), as well as by principals acting in kingly prophetic and priestly roles (Evearitt, 1996). Religious school principals serving in parochial, Catholic, Lutheran, Seventh-Day Adventist, Independent, and other types of Christian church-based and religious schools are strongly influenced by the spiritual or religious dimension of their wider school culture and community. These studies also claimed that principals' spiritual leadership roles transcend all other duties, responsibilities, and functions. The understanding of how religious school principals perceive the importance of their roles, requires an appreciation of the importance and influence of religious and faith-based beliefs within school organizations.

Paul Young, in an article titled *The Role of the Christian School Administrator* (1998), implies that successful religious school administrators are team builders that are culturally alert and mission minded. Bradley (1998) presented a biblical leadership model that characterizes principals by their vision, hard work, perseverance, submission, service, and an ability to wait on God. Wallace (1998), studying religious school principals as school leaders, commented that "When Catholic and public school principals are compared, the role of faith leader distinguishes those who lead effective religious schools. This spiritual role presupposes certain attributes and requires an individual to fulfill certain responsibilities" (p. 46). Buetow (1988), Gorman (1989), and Kralemann (1993) commented on the role of principals as faith leaders to be a strong and powerful one. Principals as faith leaders have a clear vision of the school's exact identity and mission

that is shared by the entire community.

Christian school principals develop spiritual leadership roles based on biblical characters and principles. Principals in Christian schools model integrity through biblical leadership by meeting the same biblical qualifications as that of a church pastor, deacon, or elder (Abbott, 1999; Bradley, 1991; Deuink, 1984, 1996b). Jehle (1982) echoes this sentiment when investigating Christian school principals' job descriptions stating that "A Christian administrator or principal would then be one who would direct, lead, and guide the teachers by his diligent example of study, equipping the teachers to do the task they are called to do by implanting biblical principles within them" (p. 91). Stronks and Vreugdenhil (1992), in addition to recognizing Christian school principals as educational team leaders, facilitators, advisers, and resource coordinators, affirms a biblical leadership role that influences everything that is connected with the operation of the religious school:

> The Christian school rejects the school-based management model, affirming instead the normative model based on the recognized office of biblical leadership....This means that in trust the parents, board, principal, staff and committees respect the authority/responsibility in others as God's good gifts to them. (p. 38)

Evearitt (1996) expanded upon religious school principals as spiritual leaders following biblical leadership models, stating that "Christians involved in educational leadership...benefit from a thoughtful biblical model of educational leadership for it provides a conceptual framework to enable one to think and act Christianly in the school setting to which one has been called" (p. 8). In essence, the literature confirms that principals are important elements of religious schools and are guided by their spiritual

leadership role.

Managerial and Educational Roles

> I believe the primary role of the principal of an elementary or secondary
> Christian school is to provide instructional leadership.
> (James W. Deuink, personal communication January 4, 2002)

An essential goal of every school organization is to provide the best education for

its students. Religious school principals assume important administrative, managerial,

and educational roles to attain this goal. Fulbright's (1981) descriptive analysis of a

religious school administrator's duties categorized principals' primary responsibilities as

supervision, planning, coordinating, accountability, staffing, and the promotion of the

school. Coles-Rivers (1989) investigated job functions of Protestant day school principals

to determine basic managerial functions, important competencies, and the varying

conditions under which principals work. Similar to other function-based studies, Coles-

Rivers identified six categories of tasks and functions of successful religious school

principals that included: instruction, personnel, management, institutional relations,

community relations, and self-development/humanistic leadership. Effective religious

school principals share the same attributes, tasks, and functions as their public school

counterparts. However, research that enumerated religious school principals' job

functions and responsibilities (although providing an accurate snapshot of how religious

school principals perform their jobs) failed to differentiate role expectations that are

essential, primary, or transcend all activities and behaviours. Religious school principals

serving within independent private school organizations are required to be effective

managers and administrators. This is an essential part of a role-set that defines how

religious school principals are perceived and evaluated by the school community.

Studies of religious school principals investigating administrative, managerial and educational roles have enumerated job functions to describe the nature and content of their work (Augenstein, 1988; Guggy, 1969). Deuink (1996b) lists 16 primary responsibilities in addition to enumerating 26 characteristics of a good Christian school. Alternate studies have listed religious school principals' tasks (Yopp, 1978), competencies or attributes (Marinelli, 2002; Parks, 1996), and effective practices (Hutchinson, 2001; Pazmino, 1992). Additional studies of religious school principals have involved time studies (Bock, 1998), role dimension analysis (Tarsis, 1974), and the study of changing role expectations (Boyd, 1997; Dietrich, 1997; Webb & Vulliamy, 1996a, 1996b). These studies, similar to Diamond (1997), found religious school principals to be capable educational and managerial leaders. Commentaries completed in association with Ciriello's (1998) study of Catholic school principals included investigations of principals' competencies for: institutional management (Alewine & Ciriello, 1996), building Christian community (Curran, 1998; Robinson & Ciriello, 1998a, 1998b), personnel management (Gilroy & Leak, 1996; Kozen, 1996a), school leadership (Helm, 1998), finance (Kozen, 1996b), nurturing faith (Muccigrosso, 1998a), moral and ethical development (Muccigrosso, 1998b; Robinson & Ciriello, 1998c), faith development (Robinson & Ciriello, 1998a), and curriculum and instruction (Robinson, Innes, Barton, & Ciriello, 1998). These studies confirm that religious school principals are well prepared for their tasks academically and professionally.

Krause (1988) studied principals in Canadian Seventh-Day Adventist schools and

provided an interesting and stereotypical description of Christian school principals. Principals that participated in this study averaged 45 years of age, were former classroom teachers, devoted an average of 42 hours per week to all their professional duties, taught an average of 19 hours each week, and assumed many different, competing, and complex roles. Additional Christian school principals' responsibilities involved curriculum and instruction, pupil guidance, accounting, personnel administration, plant management, financial administration, general planning, clerical duties, and relations with the school board and the general public. Additional studies of Seventh-Day Adventist school principals revealed that principals were prone to work overload, lacked appropriate time to dedicate to leadership tasks, and that administrative duties demanded such a large portion of time that it was difficult to serve as an effective instructional leader (Krause, 1988; Mayden, 1980; Vigilante, 1964; Villagomez, 1993; White, 1980). Religious school principals' roles are numerous, at times defy categorization, may not be clear-cut, can change and evolve over different time periods, and can be school-specific. These realities may contribute to stress, dissatisfaction, complexity, and tension within religious school organizations.

Christian school principals' role expectations have been analyzed by designated stakeholders within their wider school community. Stakeholders included: students (Spengel, 1997), colleagues (Ramsay, 1990), teachers (Kalangi, 1975; Williams, 1986), pastors (Wojcicki, 1982; Sieger, 1998), and administrators and members of school boards (Kavanagh, 1971). Christian school association handbooks and administrative guidebooks are important sources of information that document religious school principals' basic

principles, duties, functions, and responsibilities. Many of these handbooks are produced and revised on a continuing basis for in-service training and information purposes (Deuink, 1996b; Enderlin, 1992;, Goodhoofd, Tristram, Vanderstoel, Van Huizen, & Zondag, 1994). These handbooks include Tim Evearitt's resource manual *Leading a Christian School: A Book for Administrators and Board Members* (1996). Evearitt enumerates basic competencies of religious school administrators and principals as managers, administrators and educational leaders.

The documenting of responsibilities and competencies exhibited by religious school principals in a small way categorizes important and essential administrative and educational role expectations. *The Principal's Handbook* (Goodhoofd, et. al, 1994) identifies appropriate responsibilities for religious school principals. The *Handbook* is described as a resource "To provide the spiritual direction for the operation of the school within the context of Board policy" (p. 96). The *Handbook* elaborates on essential administrative responsibilities, commenting to practicing principals that

> Your leadership will be evaluated on three key areas: the content you give
> to the direction of Christian education, the way you model your faith in
> your personal life, the way you are able to disciple your students, staff,
> and, to some degree, the parents and board. (p. 95)

Religious school administrators' handbooks provide valuable insight into the responsibilities of religious school principals, but provide very little interpretation on how principals perceive and rationalize their ideal, complex, and evolving roles.

The literature documents role expectations and expressions of religious school principals as important managers of business, educational, and religious enterprises.

These roles are described in a variety of educational resources analyzing religious school principals as leaders within their school organizations and surrounding communities. Ciriello's (1996, 1998) studies were used as a basis for this study when investigating the complex roles of principals ministering in religious school organizations. This study used Ciriello's role-set to define religious school principals' educational roles through their leadership responsibilities for promoting vision, using principles of good leadership, and directing the curricular and instructional aspects of the school. Religious school principals' managerial roles are defined through the leadership responsibilities for personnel and institutional management, finance, and development of the school.

Role Complexity

> Christian schools build partnerships between parents, churches and the school. They reinforce the biblical principles and values which families are teaching at home. This three-fold partnership provides education for the whole person. Students have the opportunity to grow strong in their faith as they develop mentally, physically and spiritually....Christian schools strive to educate the whole person in body, mind and spirit. (Why Christian Schools, 2003)

Religious school principals as school leaders face many different challenges and opportunities when educating students, managing the educational enterprise, and building a spiritual community. Ideal principals theoretically accept and effectively resolve all challenges in an effective manner. However, there is a significant difference between principals' ideal and actual roles. Role complexity, defined as a lack of role congruence between principals' ideal and actual role elements in the performance of their jobs, manifests itself in many different forms. Role complexity or ambiguity is introduced into the principalship by an imbalance and/or overlapping of different role elements. Although

there is an overall high level of job satisfaction among religious school principals (Sutton, 1992), selective studies have documented role conflict and congruence (Elve, 1982; Tilley, 1988). Role stress, anxiety, and confusion are generally attributed to the constant pressures to meet goals and performance expectations.

Religious school principals are constantly adjusting to the evolving nature, complexity, and overwhelming demands of the school organization. These demands include the requirements to teach in addition to assuming management responsibilities, meeting with the school board, developing school policy, developing curriculum, building relationships, and dealing with day-to-day activities. In addition, religious school principals as administrators of private schools are constantly dealing with staffing, budgetary, and enrolment pressures.

The literature paints a clear picture of religious school principals showing strain and burnout due to low salaries, as well as inadequate support, facilities, and funding (Hall, 1992; Twelves, 2001). Similar to their public school counterparts, religious school principals are dealing with decreased decision-making authority, increased responsibilities, restructuring, technology-related issues, job security, the greying of the profession, and the lack of suitable replacements (Doud & Keller, 1998a). Yet, the vast majority of religious school principals view the principalship positively, finding it personally and spiritually satisfying.

Studies dealing with religious school principals' developed and general role expectations are limited in number, scope and depth of study (Egeler, 1998; Hohbein, 1976; Sahly, 1979; Splonskowski, 1965). The investigation of ideal role-sets and role

complexity as perceived by religious school principals themselves has not been studied.

However, the complexity of Christian school principals' roles has been documented

through studies that investigated principals' ability to empower staff (Pazimino, 1994),

deal with conflicting values (Massey, 1982), differing leadership styles (Henry, 1989;

Truby, 1992), decision making (Donovan, 1980), role clarity (Griesgaber, 1988; Sutton,

1992), stress (Hall, 1992), excellence (Cosgrove, 1999), and general school problems

(Neiman & Hughes, 1951). These studies confirmed that religious school principals are

subject to differing role expectations from all members of the school organization.

Principals may not have the resources, expertise, or competencies to portray ideal role

elements. In addition, complexity is introduced to the performance of Christian school

principals' roles when principals perceive -- correctly or incorrectly that they fall short of

personal expectations as school leaders.

In short, religious school principals' roles are shaped by a variety of complex

sources and expectations. In a spiritual sense, principals are regarded by students and staff

as important role models. In an administrative way, religious school principals are

expected to master the details of management to support the very survival of the school.

Above all, religious school principals are expected to respond to the spiritual,

educational, and managerial demands of a school organization, while at the same time

coping with societal change and the broader expectations of the Christian community.

Summary of Role Expectations

The importance of the principal's duties is undeniable. This school figure
has primary responsibility for acting as liaison between administrators and

classroom educators, representing the interests of the respective school in administrative decision-making, guiding and supervising personnel, structuring courses of study, designing and facilitating curricular and extracurricular programs, overseeing and enforcing disciplinary and safety regulations and procedures, setting and upholding standards of excellence, evaluating faculty and staff, serving on many committees, being the chief cheerleader for every student on every team, speaking -- formally and extemporaneously, at a variety of school functions, serving as an on-the-spot mediator in multiple contexts, and disseminating information to teachers, staff, students, and parents. (Charlotte Christian School, 2004)

In summary, the literature reviewing religious school principals' roles is limited in scope and breadth. Principals were characterized by many different role expressions, descriptors, responsibilities, and competencies. The definition of principals' roles as managerial, administrative, and spiritual school leaders based upon Ciriello's (1998) work was applicable to a cross-section of different religious school organizations. Principals experience role complexity as the nature and demands of the principalship evolve over time. The balancing of primary roles in addition to realizing ideal, learned, and perceived role elements can lead to lack of role congruence manifested as role strain and stress. The literature did not describe what religious school principals as school leaders found to be ideal, important, satisfying, difficult, and time-consuming. The literature did not include any models that described religious school principals' role elements in relation to their organization and surrounding community.

An exhaustive review of the literature published since the 1950s identified approximately 75 studies, reports, theses, dissertations, and magazine, newsletter, and journal articles that commented on the roles of religious school principals. Appendix C includes alternate references describing the Christian school movement and their

principals. A majority of these publications are relatively new, produced by researchers directly linked to the religious school movement, and are generally superficial and descriptive in nature. Most importantly, this body of research fails to bring real meaning and understanding to how religious school principals perceive the importance of their actual roles.

Social Role Theory

Social role theory explains and describes how people in organizations perceive each other's position, status, and role. "Role theory has been used extensively by observers and researchers in many kinds of organizations to better understand and predict organizational behavior (Owens, 1998, p.47). Hagan (1983) commented that role "...is the term applied to an official position within an organization or hierarchy and identifies the responsibilities, behaviors and functions which are characteristic of incumbents occupying a specific position" (p. 16). Turner (1990) further developed this definition when stating that

> A social role is a comprehensive pattern of behavior and attitudes, constituting a strategy for coping with a recurrent set of situations, which is socially identified -- more or less clearly, as an entity. A social role is played recognizably by different individuals, and supplies a major basis for identifying and placing persons in a group, organization, or society. It can be thought of as consisting of rights and duties, or of expected behavior, provided these terms are interpreted broadly. (p. 87)

This study uses social role theory as a basis to investigate how religious school principals perceive their actual roles as important school leaders.

Sergiovanni (1995), a prominent researcher of the principalship, commented that "The heart of any theory is the language used to describe and implement it. The words we

use shape the way we think...that are [*sic*] sensible and true can change when the language we use changes" (p. 58). A principal's role is well understood by all members of the school community. The jargon describing these roles is rich in descriptors, terms, and metaphors. These descriptors and metaphors create lasting, powerful, and positive images which characterize principals as important, critical, powerful, and essential to the success of every school organization.

Images of principals are created in the minds of people within the wider school organization. These images may have greater value and importance than at first glance. Although the images and language that define principals and their everyday lived experiences continues to evolve, the concept of a principal's *role* has a time-tested and universal meaning. Principals' status and roles remain as central structural concepts in the normative accounts of school organizations. Principals continually learn and serve in diffuse and ascribed roles. The interpretation of religious school principals' roles is essential to an understanding of their position and status within school organizations. Social role theory is an appropriate mechanism to understand the changing responsibilities and behaviours of principals as part of a larger school community. Investigating principals' roles

> ...is useful insofar as it provides a basis for thinking systematically about complex problems, such as understanding the nature of educational organizations. It is useful because it enables us to *describe* what is going on, *explain* it, *predict* future events under given circumstances, and -- essential to the professional practitioner -- think about ways to exercise *control* over events. (Owens, 1998, p. 29)

Role is a term borrowed directly from the theatre. Sarbin and Allen (1968)

described role as "...a metaphor intended to denote that construct adheres to certain "parts" (or positions) rather than to the players who read or recite them, ...a set of propositions employing a consistent idiom that guides the search for facts" (p. 489). Johnson (1995), defined role as "...an important concept because it is through roles that individuals are connected to social systems" (p. 237). Heiss (1981) widened this definition, stating that "...a role is a set of expectations in the sense that it is what one should do" (p. 95). Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) noted that "...expectations are perceived by most role theorists to be an essential ingredient in any formula for predicting social behavior" (p. 58). Ultimately, "...role is linked to the position and not to the person occupying the position" (Roberts, 1983, p. 26). Roles are collective images describing what principals are, can be, and should be.

Principals perform leadership roles as actors, but on an educational stage. Ideal roles are constantly negotiated, subject to interpretation, and evolve within the wider and surrounding school culture. Goffman (1959) drew attention to the lack of congruence between ideal roles and real-life situations when commenting that

> ...people in organizations have definite roles to perform, and many interactive factors help to determine precisely with kind of *performance* each role will receive. Each *actor* must interpret his or her role, and this interpretation depends to some extent on what the individual brings to the role. (Owens, 1998, p. 47)

Principals are guided by perceived and learned roles, incumbent responsibilities, and related behaviours. Principals mold and shape their positions to better fulfil implied and stated role expectations. The social role theory literature constantly asks the question

social and cultural context, the social roles of principals have been studied since the early 1950s. Beynon (1965) observed that " The creation of these actions either *by* individuals or *for* individuals is conceived in a unit called *role* which has measurable dimensions called role expectations. This focus on role expectations becomes a fundamental concern of any social system" (p. 1). Principals' roles as social constructs enables them to retain, negotiate, and understand the demands of their position. Additionally, roles assist principals to determine status, privilege, power, and affiliated rights. Ideal or normative role expectations are constructed as a learned product of a group experience. Social role theory explains individual behaviour and expectations within larger social systems. Social role theory presents the framework within which to study roles and role expectations of community and culture. Principals, as actors, manoeuver within familiar, different, and diverse social paradigms fulfilling their roles as school leaders.

Enacting roles as groups or as individuals does not rule out novel behaviour. Deviating from normative roles is a given part of social change. Snowden and Gorton (1998) stated that principals "...are influenced in the development of their expectations and need dispositions by the larger culture...that the administrator's behavior is affected not only by personal needs but also by the role expectations held by others associated with the institution" (p. 85). Principals in religious schools are no exceptions here. These common roles are grounded in common beliefs, values, and actions. Ott (1989) described principals' normative behaviours as consolidated assumptions, values, and beliefs that as unstated group expectations or behavioural blueprints can be viewed as "...organizational sea anchors providing predictability and stability" (p. 37). This study is an exploratory

and descriptive investigation of religious school principals' common role expressions. Principals' role-related behaviours are invariant sets of social patterns observed and documented by all members of religious school organizations. Capturing these simple images is the basis for this study. Observing principals' novel, deviating, and ideal behaviours is an area for further study.

The main goal of examining principals' roles is to discover how principals act within their school settings. In addition, social role theory provides a mechanism to examine the organizational culture that in part frames the mission, purpose, values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms that people share. Examining principals' normative behaviours is an effective way to explore the culture of religious schools and the shared meaning this creates. This study limits the exploration of social roles to religious school principals' perceptions of the importance of their actual roles. Specifically, this study reflects Christian elementary school principals' perceptions through their comments on how they see themselves as *spiritual, managerial,* and *educational* leaders.

Historical Developments

Social role theory emerged from competing theories of social behaviour in the early twentieth century as a theory that attempted to document, describe, understand, and bring meaning and social identity to people and their positions. The historical development and interpretation of social role theory has been well documented (Biddle, 1992; Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Clouse, 1989; Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Scott, 2001; Thomas & Biddle, 1966). Notable contributions to the development of social role theory included Mead's (1934) studies of role-taking and role-giving in the development and negotiation

of position and status within social organizations. Linton's (1936) anthropological studies

demonstrated that positions within organizations are described as dynamic patterns.

Linton stated that

> A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially
> aligned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he
> puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is
> performing a role....There are no roles without statuses and no statuses
> without roles. Just as in the case of status, the term role is used with a
> double significance. Every individual has a series of roles deriving from
> the various patterns in which he participates, and at the same time a role,
> in general, which represents the sum total of these roles and determines
> what he does for his society and what he can expect from it...Although all
> statuses and roles derive from social patterns and are integral parts of
> patterns, they have an independent function with relation to the individuals
> who occupy particular statuses and exercise their roles. To such
> individuals the combined status and role represent the minimum attitudes
> and behavior which he must assume if he is to participate in the overt
> expression of the pattern. Status and role serve to reduce the ideal patterns
> for social life to individual terms. They become models for organizing the
> attitudes and behavior of the individuals so that these will be congruous to
> those of other individuals participating in the expression of the pattern.
> (pp. 113-114)

Roles and their accompanying status change as roles are renegotiated. Postwar role-

related studies included Bowman's (1949) and Newcomb's (1950a, 1950b) research on

the development of role as a central concept in the formulation of the field of social

psychology.

Getzels' (1952, 1958, 1978) early work in collaboration with Guba (Getzels &

Guba, 1954, 1955a, 1955b, 1957) and others (Getzels & Thelen, 1960; Getzels, Lipham,

& Campbell, 1968; Mintzberg, 1975) contributed to the definition of roles and how they

are constructed and negotiated within social systems. Getzels's insights and model-

building exercises conceptualized role-related behaviours in terms of role taking, role conflict, and role formulation. Roles were incumbent with expectations that were attached to specific positions. Status was attributed to social positions granting obligations and rights. Role expectations were expressed as responsibilities and obligations which defined the boundaries of what individuals within roles could perform to be consistent with specific roles. The Getzels-Guba social systems model stressed the interplay between organizational needs and the personal needs of actors that fill various roles. "Organizational behaviour results from the interaction of the expectation of others with one's own needs and personality" (Rivers, 1977, p. 27). Lipham summarized the contributions of Getzels to social role theory when he stated,

> ...the three dominant themes that characterize Getzels' work in educational administration -- the complexity of the human personality, the interaction of personality with the formal and informal roles in schools as social systems, and individual and group values in the variety of communities to which the school is related -- if essential educational change ever is to be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of schools. (Lipham, 1988, p. 182)

An equilibrium between the needs of the organization and those of the individual is central in setting, expressing, and modifying role behaviours in addition to resolving role complexity, stress, congruence and conflict. Getzels's models are essential instruments in the development of role theory. These models included

> ...Getzels' (1952) psycho-sociological framework for the study of educational administration, the Getzels-Guba (1957) model of the administrative process, the Getzels-Thelen (1960) model of the classroom as a social system, and Getzels' (1978) model of the communities of education. (Lipham, 1988, p. 171)

Definable role models, competencies, and a distinctive language quickly emerged from these early studies to create normative inventories and assessment tools. Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) were early role theory researchers who studied normative behaviours to investigate role expression, definition, and normative cultural patterns. Turner (1962) pursued the concept of role taking as a gradual process of people conforming to role expectations within a larger culture. Katz (1964), in collaboration with Kahn (Katz & Kahn, 1978), built upon this body of research to describe role as a set of interdependent behaviours within a larger social system. Researchers debated and developed the concepts of role-sending, receiving and taking roles as "...a stable collective pattern in which people play their parts" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 189). At its most basic level, a role was described as an expected pattern or set of behaviours labelled in the everyday language of the people in a social system.

Role theory started to lose status as a valid and reproducible social-psychological theory in the mid 1960s. "The simplicity of the role definition as a set of expected behaviors masks the complexity and ambiguity that is discovered as one probes more deeply into the underlying assumptions behind the definition" (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1990, p. 169). Social role theory attempted to describe roles shaped by both internal and external forces. In many ways, social role theory although under scrutiny by social psychologists continued to be an important tool to understand individuals, and their positions and status within organizations.

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Rosenthal (1964), building on the concept of role change, commented that "...human organizations as open systems of roles...attain

constancy and stability in terms of the patterned recurrence of such acts rather than in terms of the persons who perform them" (p. 187). Roles are defined by forces and pressures originating outside the organization in which the behaviour occurs. Sarbin (1959, 1960), in collaboration with colleagues (Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Sarbin & Farberow, 1952), developed the concept of social role as the product of the interaction of self and role. Sarbin and Allen (1968) described role expectations as the

> ...conceptual bridge between social structure and role behavior....Role expectations are comprised of the rights and privileges, the duties and obligations, of any occupant of a social position in relation to persons occupying other positions in the social structure...collections of cognitions -- beliefs, subjective probabilities, and elements of knowledge -- which specify in relation to complementary roles the rights and duties, the appropriate conduct, for persons occupying a particular position. (pp. 497-498)

Since the late 1960s, the social psychology of *status* and *role* have undergone criticism, consolidation, and review. The theoretical links between position/status and social roles, although continually tested, are "...part of the social science lexicon and are employed conceptually when empirical issues appropriately call for their use" (Platt, 2001, p.15094). Biddle (1979) commented that

> ...role theory differentiates individual behaviors, social activities, and the phenomenal processes that presumably lie behind them...role theory accommodates symbols as well as nonsymbiotic forms of behavior...a means for expressing both the concrete thoughts of subjects and the abstract notions of investigators. (p. 12)

Katz and Kahn (1978), as pioneers in the development of social role theory, modelled a social role theory based

...on the assumption of an interaction between two persons -- the person performing in the role (focal person) and another person who holds a set of beliefs that constitute the role (role sender). The role sender communicates this set of beliefs (termed the sent role) to the focal person. The focal person receives this communication in the form of the perceived role and responds to it by taking some action (role behavior). Finally, that behavior is fed back to the role sender and serves as an input into the role sender's belief system. A role sender's perceptions of the role behavior are then compared to some standard or expectation held by the role sender for the focal's behavior, and the result of that comparison may influence the sender's expectations for future behaviors. The role expectations, in turn, are the basis for the sent role as the whole process recycles. (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1990, pp. 188-189)

The best way to study principals' roles is to observe the characteristic behaviours of principals as they cope with real-world problems. This study recognizes the complexity and imprecise nature of social role theory. Yet, the precepts of role theory present an excellent framework within which to study, understand, and interpret the roles of religious school principals serving in Niagara Christian schools.

Principals' Roles

Principals serving in Ontario public schools and schools participating in the Principals' Refresher Course are instructed to practice skills and competencies relevant to the realities of the principals' role. A checklist is provided for all participants:

The following checklist is provided as a reference for some of the skills candidates must practise: decision making; sharing power; facilitating; motivating; resolving conflict; consulting; counselling; agenda setting; delegating; coping with the unexpected; managing proactively; managing stress; team building; interpersonal skills; group skills; chairing meetings; communication (oral, written, cross-cultural); negotiating; data gathering and assessment; goal setting; empowering others; reading the environment. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1997, p. 14)

Principals' actual, learned, and perceived role expressions provide important images of the principalship. Normative roles are ideal roles agreed upon by a collective of role-givers and role-takers. Normative behaviours, competencies, responsibilities, and roles are standards created by society at large for the purpose of articulating ideal roles. A normative behaviour

> ...is what some sociologists call a sanctioned pattern, ...a norm that states the expected relationship of a person in a certain position to others he comes into contact with is often call the *role* of this person....We must not mix norms and actual behavior together in a shapeless mass if we are to examine the relations between the two, and the relations do confront us and demand analysis. It is clear, for instance, that norms do not materialize out of nothing, but emerge from ongoing activities. (Cunningham, 2000, pp. 134-135)

The development and documentation of principals' normative behaviours is a difficult exercise. Principals are not perfect, nor are the expectations of the larger school community in which they serve. A discussion of normative roles of principals is of limited interest for the purpose of this study.

Principals learn their roles in part by observing other principals. Learned and perceived roles become real and actual roles when principals cognitively recognize and react in definable behaviours. Ideal roles are best described as a set of ideas associated with a social status. Ideas define a principal's behaviour in relationship with all other positions. The elementary school principalship is built around a set of ideas and beliefs about who principals are, values related to goals worthy of pursuit, norms about how principals are supposed to behave, and attitudes about how principals are positioned to be effective and successful (Krajewski, 1979). Defining ideal roles is difficult. Similar to

defining normative roles, defining ideal roles moves beyond the intended boundaries of social role theory. However, ideal and normative role expressions are continually incorporated in the lexicon of educators, researchers, and practicing principals. This study describes religious school principals' actual roles, but stops short of describing ideal role-sets.

The literature documents studies that investigate and reconcile what principals ought to do (the ideal role) as opposed to what principals actually do (the actual role) (Burrow, 1991; Carlson, 1971; Wilson, 1980). Principals' prototypes are constantly being violated by a wide range of individual principals' behaviours, changing circumstances, and evolving school cultures. Socially reproduced roles and their meanings are situationally specific and subject to change over time. Ideal roles tend to defy explanation as individual principals frame their own world experiences in a shifting sea of paradigms, value systems, perspectives, and beliefs. Defining self-concepts (as well as role behaviour) is a dynamic process that is constantly in flux and subject to revision. Ultimately, school cultures, whether intentionally or not, create ideal and normative principals' prototypes. These prototypes or models exhibit a full range of organizational roles and role expectations for principals in the performance of their positions within educational organizations. Within this mixture of perspectives and perceptions "...a single, ideal portrait of the principalship does not exist. Public school administration has become a gallery of many desirable portraits" (Hausman, Crow, & Sperry, 2000, p. 13). Thomas Sergiovanni (1991), studying actual and ideal conceptions of the principalship, reflects on this dilemma when stating that

Comparing actual and ideal conceptions of tasks and roles is comparing descriptive and normative views of the principalship. Normative is the ideal view. Descriptive encompasses actual choices made by principals to accommodate the constraints they face (for example, conflicting expectations, ambiguous goals, political realities, declining enrollment, labor unions, financial shortfalls, de facto autonomy of teachers), sometimes at the expense of their intentions and preferences. (p. 21)

Principals' ideal roles have shifted from administrative, to management, instructional, and currently to primary leadership roles over the past 50 years (Valentine, Maher, Quinne, & Irvin, 1999).

The role of the principal has shifted noticeably in this century, from one of *efficient manager* in the twenties and thirties, *democratic and practical leader* in the forties and fifties, *technician, bureaucrat, and humanistic leader* in the sixties and seventies, and *instructional leader, visionary, and change agent* in the eighties and nineties....As the principalship moves into a new millennium, characterizing the principalship with a few key words is more difficult than ever. (p. 56)

Summary of Social Role Theory

Documenting the changing pictures, images, metaphors, and language describing principals' primary roles over time is an important area of investigation. Principals' changing roles are worthy of investigation. This study explores religious school principals' actual roles in an attempt to understand their position as school leaders.

Elementary School Principals' Roles

Principals are accountable for the learning climate established in schools, the quality and equity of educational experiences delivered to students. They are expected to know how to acquire the resources to assist staff in program development, implementation, delivery, and evaluation and how to support and encourage staff involvement and leadership in these processes. They must be able to facilitate staff growth and professional development in new ideas and strategies... (Ontario Ministry of Education,

1997, p. 5)

Schools are all about teaching and learning. Principals are responsible for setting a school climate that encourages and supports the very best instructional practices. Principals play, assume, and are drafted into familiar and unusual roles while performing on the school stage. Principals reluctantly assume a wide range of important, difficult, and satisfying roles.

Complexity is observed as role conflict, ambiguity, uncertainty, and strain. In terms of this study, complexity is best understood as a lack of congruence between religious school principals' actual and ideal roles. Alternately, role incongruence can also be understood as an imbalance of principals' primary roles. Block (1982), reviewing the roles of elementary school principals, commented that "...the elementary school principalship is characterized by a multitude of roles involving frequent and often sustained interaction with other people" (p. 3). Doud and Keller (1998b), reflected on principals' evolving roles, stating that "...the principal's role has become increasingly diverse and complex" (p. 11). Principals are spending a larger proportion of their time on administrative and managerial tasks, taking on additional responsibilities, and developing new skills to cope with the demands of the job. Principals' roles change as the concept of school changes. Successful principals recognize change, complexity, and a lack of role congruence in their position as school leaders.

I perused over 150 research studies published between 1950 and 2003 that investigated the roles and role expressions specific to mainly elementary school

principals. Upon further analysis, these studies used over 50 different role descriptors and

metaphors to describe the complex roles of elementary school principals. Selective

descriptors and metaphors included principals as: gatekeepers, architects, referees,

orchestral conductors, change agents, managers, strategic planners, miracle workers,

embattled figureheads, consultants, developers, mentors, activists, and teacher of

teachers. In summary, principals in all school organizations are challenged by many roles.

Historical Developments

> The principalship is one of the most well-established roles in education
> and although there might be some debate about the nature and boundaries
> of the principal's role, few would disagree that the principal is a key
> ingredient in the successful operation of a school. However, the
> complexities of administering schools are greater than those of a decade or
> two ago, and the problems to be faced during this decade, the eighties, are
> predicted to be even greater. (Crawford, 1984, p.1)

Principals' roles have evolved since the introduction of the principalship in the

early 1920s (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Crotts, 1963; Cuban, 1986; Frey, 1963; Sweitzer,

1963). Dominant metaphorical themes of the 1920s identified principals as head teachers.

Beck and Murphy (1993) described the 1950s elementary school principal as "...a skilled

administrator combining practical skills with theoretical insights" (p. 52). The 1960s saw

the principal as "...a member of a well-developed educational bureaucracy" (p. 89). The

1970s described the principals as "...expected to lead, not only teachers, but also persons

within the larger community" (p. 116). The 1980s saw the principal as an "...instructional

leader, guiding teachers and students toward productive learning experiences" (p. 148).

Principals' roles have also been studied by a series of National Association of Elementary

School Principals (NAESP) surveys repeated every 10 years (Doud, 1989a, 1989b; Doud & Keller, 1998a, 1998b; NAESP, 2001; Pharis & Zakariya, 1979).

Principals' roles tracked over time have been subject to interpretation, clarification, and further definition. Castle, Mitchell and Gupta (2002), studying Ontario public school principals, stated that today's work environment is highly fragmented and complex. Principals take "...on diverse roles and tasks in limited time frames, they had to attend to several things at once, all the while trying to give equal attention to each" (p. 29). Principals' roles continue to evolve in all educational organizations. Ubben and Hughes (1997) commented that

> ...roles are the official positions and offices that have been established to carry out the functions of the organization. The behaviors that are to comprise a role are called role expectations. Every role has certain normative responsibilities and these will differ by role...because roles are occupied with real people who stamp each role with their own individuality. So, the principal must consider the ideographic or personal aspects of social behavior. The principal must know both the role expectations of the particular job and the needs disposition of the individual. The challenge is to try to address both individual and organizational needs to achieve as much congruence as possible. (pp. 11-12)

Matthews and Crow (2003) identified seven main roles concepts necessary for contemporary elementary school principals as leaders and reformers. These seven roles were conceptualized as being learners, mentors, supervisors, leaders, managers, politicians, and advocates. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) contended that the five critical functions of and tasks of school administrators included: instruction and curriculum development; pupil personnel services; staff personnel services; community-school

leadership; and organization, structure, coordination, and management of school finances. Ubben and Hughes (1997) deemed the five major responsibilities of a school principal included: staffing and personnel development, pupil services, curriculum development, finance and facilities management, and community relations. These role concepts are situational and may not be applicable to all school organizations. A "...new person coming into the principalship can be confused as to what is expected, what is needed, and what should be done" (p. 1). The study of role conception, how and why roles change over time, who helps define principals' roles, and how principals take, assume, and learn roles is an area for further study. Matthews and Crow (2003) presented an excellent summary and discussion on the historical view of principal's roles as well as outlining contemporary issues and their implications. The authors of this study commented that "The Principalship has developed into a complex role -- far more complex than it was originally conceived" (p. 33). This continues to be true of principals serving in all types of public, private, parochial, and religious schools.

Principals as leaders assume a multitude of different roles when discharging their day-to-day responsibilities. "Principals may not have vertical checklists, on which they check one responsibility off after another. They work with horizontal checklists, doing many things at any one time" (Cunningham, 2000, p. 4). Role complexity or ambiguity occurs at different levels because of the conflicting nature and inconsistent application of role expressions and expectations. Principals' roles are negotiated by principals themselves and are also shaped by the expectations of the stakeholders within the entire school organization. Stakeholders are administrators, teachers, parents, students, support

staff, and school board officials. Each stakeholder has a unique perception of principals' roles, competencies, and related behaviours. Social role theory continues to be an effective means to describe and define principals and roles within educational organizations.

Role Complexity

> Each behavioral act can be judged from an almost endless array of conceptual viewpoints, many of which are capable of generating useful information about the role with which we are concerned. (Biddle, 1979, p. 79)

Principals learn their roles from a diverse range of sources. Ideally, principals portray different roles simultaneously while performing their jobs. Problems occur when roles are not balanced, overlap, and when principals do not have the abilities to effectively execute these roles. Members of the educational organization and the wider school community also observe and perceive principals' roles from different perspectives. In an ideal setting, all perspectives are accurate, balanced, important, realistic, and descriptive. Together, these perspectives provide valuable insights and data on the social role of principals within the context of school. This study assumes all religious school principals desire to be effective school leaders practicing a balanced and full interpretation of the principalship. Together, these leadership role attributes are not unique to Catholic and Christian schools. Although not tested within this study, Ciriello's (1998) leadership role-set describing Catholic school principals is assumed to accurately describe principals ministering in private Christian elementary school settings.

The literature includes studies that investigate principals' role congruence

(Sanderson, 1984; Sloan & Del Bene, 1983), stress as it is related to principals'
conceptualizing ideal versus real roles (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Rosenthal, 1964; Lutton,
1988), and role ambiguity (Andrews, 1995; Doremus, 1977; Eisenhaur, Willower, &
Licata, 1985; Hallinger & Hausman, 1994; Howe, 1988; Miller, 1979; Rutan, 1981).
Studies investigating principals' perceptions of actual versus ideal roles (Calhoun, 1980;
Carlson, 1971; Dixon, 1994; Jackson, 1978; Marmion, 1977; Wilson, 1980) conveyed
that principals as school leaders obtain knowledge about their roles from many sources.
Principals require patience, guidance, and professional development to be successful
leaders. Tension often exists between principals' expression of ideal and actual roles.
Tension leads to burnout, ineffectiveness, and stress. Sarason's (1997) comments are
relevant here:

> What *does* a principal do? What is a principal *supposed* to do? What
> would we *want* a principal to do? In each of these questions the reader
> should substitute the verb *be* for the verb *do* as a way of indicating that as
> important as what a principal does is how that person is regarded and
> judged by others, and that cannot be determined by listing or describing
> what he or she does. How we see ourselves in a particular role, how we
> want others to see us in that role, may or may not be discrepant with how
> others see us....Our relationship is not governed by a "constitution" or any
> explicit rules and regulations. There is an unexpressed assumption that
> each knows what neighborliness and courtesy entails, an assumption that
> may be proved right or wrong.:...What a principal wants to do is often in
> conflict with what he or she can or is allowed to do. (pp. 83-85)

Principals serving in different types of elementary schools have different learning
curves developing the essential skills tied to their roles. Role development is an evolving
process: Roles change as principals change. Much of the literature confirms that
principals' roles are in constant transition (Buckley, 1997; Cullers, 1976; Hallinger &

Hausman, 1992; Shellard, 2003), are unpredictable (Harold, 1997, 1998), evolve in

different ways (Conners & Sharpe, 1996; Louis & Murphy, 1994), and directly affect

principals' perspectives about leadership (Glasman & Heck, 1992; Rogers, 1980) and

responsibilities (Jones, 1999). General studies on the changing complexity of principals'

roles reflected that their roles are changing as the concept of school changes (Enns, 1981;

Hallinger, 1992; McIntosh, Montgomerie, & Mattson, 1988; Noe, 1998; Schall &

Heichberger, 1973; Whitaker, 1994, 1998). The study of elementary school principals'

normative roles is an interesting area of investigation (Coffland, 1969; Del Bene, 1982;

Duke, 1998; Riehl, 2000; Sloan & Del Bene, 1983). The creation of the Role Norm

Inventory to measure role clarity assisted in the development of principals' role-related

expressions, inventories, and behaviours (Foskett, 1967; Foskett & Wolcott, 1966).

Documenting normative roles is to pursue a moving target at the best of times. As

principals and schools change, so do normative role expressions and expectations.

Effective principals balance actual, perceived, and learned roles. Religious school

principals striving to be ideal principals attempt to successfully manipulate educational,

managerial and spiritual roles.

In contrast to principals' real and ideal role sets, researchers have investigated

principals' perceived roles from the perspective of the school community. Teachers

(Bernstein, 1959; Ezell, 1975; Myers, 1985; Richardson & Lane, 1996; Taff, 1997),

parents (Owens, 1963; Voelker, 1978), superintendents (Burlison, 1990; Randall 1994),

school board members (Thomas, 1983; Vatalaro, 1997), and interns (Edwards, 2001;

Finn-Pike, 2001; Harris-Anstey, 2003) view the principal in different, yet similar ways.

Beahr (1975), identifying problems of principals within school organizations, stated that

"...the elementary school principal occupies a strategic position in developing and

maintaining a school climate conducive to learning" (p. 85). Sloan and Del Bene (1983)

framed principals as educational leaders, chief administrators, and operations managers

when commenting that the elementary school principal

> ...exists within two communities, the educational community and the
> larger community which a school serves. Each of these communities
> perceives the role of the elementary school principal from its own
> perspective. In addition to the views of others are the principal's own
> perceptions of his role developed through education and experience...The
> normative world of the principal is comprised of members of each of the
> two communities and the principal. Daily interactions within the
> normative world shape the role and behavior of the principal. Each of
> these groups perceives the principal's role from differing perspectives and
> may have differing expectancies of the principal. Hence, while there are
> many methods of acting in different situations, over a period of time, there
> has developed an acceptable mode which is perceived as being the norm.
> This norm provides a benchmark for performance expectations. (p. 11)

An investigation of principals' perceptions of their roles discloses information

that is relevant here (David, 1985; Kane, 1976; Noronha, 1985). Principals utilize the

same full range of role expressions used by members of the school community. A further

examination of the literature confirms that the range and application of role descriptors

used to describe elementary school principals is as diverse for principals as for members

of the wider school community. Emergent themes derived from research studies over the

past 50 years affirmed that principals striving to be ideal leaders assume complex,

important, time-tested and lasting roles. Cuban (1986) in a paper titled "Principaling:

Images and Roles" commented on principals' lasting role expressions:

...images are powerful. They shape behavior. Advertising, politics, and television document the potency of the pictures we have in our heads. The principalship is no exception. Embedded in the origins and history of the post, images of what a principal should be have competed for attention from each generation of would-be administrators. Principal as Bureaucrat and Principal as Instructional Supervisor are dominant images that have fueled debate over the nature of the position over the last century. (Cuban, 1986, p. 107)

Summary of Elementary School Principals' Roles

Principals serving in elementary schools assume varied roles derived from the communities in which they serve as school leaders. Sarbin and Allen (1968) commented that "...organizational culture is the set of shared orientations that holds a unit together and gives it a distinctive identity. Although climate tends to focus on shared perceptions, culture is defined in terms of shared assumptions, values, and norms" (p. 406). Productive principals learn, assume, and exhibit key roles within this framework. These roles are described as educational, administrative, and managerial school leaders. Religious school principals portray similar roles in their school organizations.

A lasting and significant body of literature argues that principals serving in schools are essential ingredients in the successful development of educational organizations (Sharp & Walter, 2003). Principals encounter complexity specific to their roles at all levels. Michael Fullan (2003), commenting on how role overload and role ambiguity contribute to barriers to effective school leadership, stated that "When so many demands are placed on the principalship, it is not just the sheer amount of work that is the problem, but it is also the inconsistent and ambiguous messages" (p. 22). Elementary school principals share similar roles, expectations, and expressions. In addition, roles

evolve and change labels over time. The use of social role theory is an important, yet blunt instrument with which to understand principalship. The analysis of principals in public schools is an important first step to understand principals serving in religious schools.

Christian Private Schools

Christian education is the process of helping students become conformed to the image of Christ. (Deuink, 1996a, p. 12)

Principals serving in Christian day schools utilize effective instructional practices, employ the best qualified teachers available, coordinate parent-teacher meetings, field school sports teams, organize school trips, raise funds for special projects, orchestrate school assemblies, and educate children, utilizing a variety of programs and a multitude of other tasks. Christian schools may appear and operate no differently from their public and private school counterparts. However, Christian schools are different from other private and secular schools. Christian schools, their teachers, principals, support staff, parents, students, and their surrounding educational community strongly adhere to a Christian philosophy of education.

Ken Smitherman (2002) identified distinctive characteristics of Christian schools that included: a Christian philosophy of education and a vision that students "...will acquire wisdom, knowledge, and a biblical world view as evidenced by a lifestyle of character, leadership, service, stewardship, and worship" (p. 1). Christian schools are local schools, smaller than most public schools, have low teacher-to-pupil ratios, a strong sense of community, the Bible as the basis for all curriculum, and an emphasis on

Christian character development, social responsibility, and discipline. Principals serving in Christian schools pray for their staff and students, actively pursue opportunities to incorporate Christian messages into the daily routine of their schools, seek guidance from Scripture and the Holy Spirit, participate in worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelist activities. Knight (1998), reflecting on a Christ-centered approach to education stated that

> Christianity is based upon a distinctive and unique view of reality, truth, and value. The educational configuration stemming from that worldview grows out of those beliefs. Christian education that is Christian in fact, rather than merely in word, must view the nature and potential of the student, the role of the teacher, the content of the curriculum, the methodological emphasis, and the social function of the school in a light of its philosophic undergirding. (p. 191)

Knight goes on to state that "From the Christian viewpoint, the goal of education is the restoration of God's image in each person" (p. 241). The basic premises of Christian education

> ...are sincerely held and self-consistent, for they are convictions based on the facts and principles of Scripture. Rooted in the infallible, supernaturally revealed truth of God, these premises cohere, for they exhibit the unity of Scriptural revelation. They affect every part of Christian education -- its subject matter, standards, strategies, policies, and procedures. They are ignored at our peril and must be retained at all cost. The Bible not only is the source of infallible premises for Christian education but also provides an educational model. ...there is the pedagogical model of the Bible as a whole. Its goal, to conform redeemed man to the image of God in Christ, is that of all Christian education. (Horton, 1992, pp. ix-x)

Most Christian schools are affiliated with Christian school or denomination-based associations. However, a significant number of Christian private schools are independent

or are ministries of local church-based organizations. The Christian or church school movement continues to grow in all parts of the mainly English-speaking world. Although an international movement in Canada and around the world, a majority of Christian schools, educators, and Christian education associations are located in the United States.

Ethnographic studies on the Christian school movement included Susan Rose's (1988) *Keeping Them Out of the Hands of Satan,* Alan Peshkin's (1986) *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School,* Melinda Bollar Wagner's two studies (1990) *God's Schools: Choice and Compromise in American Society,* and (1995) *Christian Schools: Walking the Christian Walk the American Way,* and Paul Parson's (1987) *Inside America's Christian Schools.* These works provided a firsthand description of Christian schools and their culture. These studies described in a meaningful way the development of the Christian school movement, accurately describing Christian schools' staff, culture, philosophies of education, and their place within Christian communities.

Toews (2002) identified distinguishing characteristics common to most Christian schools. Specific characteristics included: school staff, parents and children being *born again* Christians espousing a Christian worldview, students being actively engaged to become responsible and growing Christians, and all staff being recognized as important Christian role models. Other characteristics common to most Christian schools include high academic standards (Jeynes, 2002), strong culture (Beech, 2000), loyalty and support of parents (Vryhof, 2004), discipline and a rigid dress code, strong code of conduct, a mission-minded zeal (Hill, 2001), goal-orientated and a purpose-driven organizational structure (Fowler, 1987; Greene, 1997; Herndon, 1984; Justins & Sanber, 2002;

Vankleek, 1983). David Hocking (1983) emphasized the importance of a Christ-centered

philosophy of education within Christian schools when stating that "The word theological

assumes that it is impossible to understand the educational process apart from God

Himself. The Christian begins with God as the Creator and Source of all true education"

(p. 7). This philosophical view of education is fundamental to everything that permeates

Christian schools. Christian schools teach all subjects adhering to a Christian perspective

of the world; a perspective best described where Scripture is the guiding light for all

decisions and Jesus is the master teacher.

Christian Education

> Our role as administrators is advancing the kingdom of God through
> education is vital, compelling, exciting, frustrating, overwhelming,
> sometimes impossible....We have to be mighty warriors, serious thinkers,
> and disciples who depend totally on the Holy Spirit of God. I can't think of
> a task more critical to the cause of Christ than training the next generation
> of believers to think and act Christianly. (Bowdon, 1998, p. 5)

Members of the Christian school movement (Horton, 1992) believe that God has

commanded two institutions to educate: the home and the church. Scripture reveals that

parents are responsible for their children and charges them with an educational task.

Deuteronomy 6:7 instructs parents to "teach them God's laws [*sic*] diligently unto thy

children..."; Proverbs 22:6 commands parents to "Train up a child in the way he should

go..."; and Ephesians 6:4 says, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring

them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Alvis (1995) commented that "While

some may argue that a parent can pass that responsibility to another, the Bible reminds us

that it is legally impossible to transfer this responsibility" (p. 24). Education of children is

the prerogative not of the state, but of parents. Christian school parents in part reluctantly

delegate this responsibility to the Christian school community.

"Today, society has become so complex that few homes and no regular church

education program can provide adequate general education. ...schools are sometimes

forced to take on some roles that used to belong to the family or church" (Van

Brummelen, 1998, p. 5). Parents from Christian families choose to send their children to

private Christian schools. Christian schools are mandated to

> ...help students to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to
> function in a culturally diverse society and to become respectful and self-
> directed citizens who contribute to a sustainable economy....The school
> will be an encouraging learning community that stimulates its students to
> be and become followers of Jesus Christ by developing and using their
> gifts and God-given resources responsibly and creatively to serve God and
> their neighbors. (Van Brummelen, 1998, p. 7)

Christian schools are Christ-centered. Truth is taught from a biblical perspective. "A

biblical view of knowledge affirms God's revelation, providence and acts, and

acknowledges that knowledge must lead to response, commitment and service" (Van

Brummelen, 1998, p. 159). Christian love is the basis for Christian education.

The basic philosophical postulate underlying Christian education is that the Bible

is the foundation for all curricular, social, and educational activities. The primary goal of

Christian education that gives value to educational tasks is "To teach children to love God

with all their heart, soul, mind and strength through a transforming, redemptive, personal

relationship with Jesus Christ of Nazareth as Lord and Saviour" (Mark 12:30). Knight

(1998) commented that "Christian educational goals are broader than those of secularized

education, since Christian education seeks to prepare the young for both the present world and the world to come" (p. 243). Knight comments on the religious nature of education offered within Christian schools when stating that

> Christianity is based upon a distinctive and unique view of reality, truth, and value. The educational configuration stemming from that worldview grows out of those beliefs. Christian education that is Christian in fact, rather than merely in word, must view the nature and potential of the student, the role of the teacher, the content of the curriculum, the methodological emphasis, and the social function of the school in light of its philosophic undergirding. (Knight, 1998, p. 191)

Christian education within the Christian school context trains students for Christian ministry and for the world of work, creating a balance between spiritual and academic integrity. It does all this with the primary goal of "reconciliation and the restoration of the image of God in its students" (Knight, 1998, p. 242). Knight goes on to state that

> ...it can be said that the social function of the Christian school has both a conservative and a revolutionary aspect. The mixture of those two roles helps the developing Christian to become one who is able to be in the world but not of the world. In essence, the function of the Christian school is to educate the youth of the church for service to God and their neighbors, rather than to train them for self-service through the acquisition of a "good position" and a comfortable income. These, it is true, may be by-products of Christian education, but they are not central to its purpose. (p. 240)

The theological basis for the philosophy of Christian school education is that "The world theological assumes that it is impossible to understand the educational process apart from God Himself. The Christian begins with God as the Creator and Source of all true education" (Hocking, 1983, p. 7). Deuink (1996a) best sums up this philosophical

position when stating that "Christian education is the process of helping students become conformed to the image of Christ" (p. 12). Christian schools provide Christian education so that students, staff, and members of the entire school community can better know, experience, and ultimately share God with others.

> The purpose of Christian education is to bring people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, to train them in a life of discipleship, and to equip them for Christian service in a world today. It is to develop in believers a biblical worldview that will assist them in making significant decisions from a Christian perspective. It is helping believers to "think Christianly" about all areas of life so that they can impact society with the message of the gospel. In essence, it is the development of a Christian worldview. (Williams, 2001, p. 133)

Historical Developments

> The educational goal of the school is to insure that each student has the opportunity to develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially (Luke 2:52) in the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). (Deuink, 1996b, p.25)

Religious-based schools are among America's and Canada's oldest continuing institutions. Evangelical Protestant schools in Canada and the United States, predominantly Christian in character and purpose, predated state-funded government schools by over 200 years. Historical and religious studies have documented the development of religious education in Upper Canada and Ontario (DeBoer, 1971; Katz & Mattingly, 1975; Perry, 2000; Stamp, 1985; Zondag, 1990). Since Confederation (1867), schooling in Canada has been recognized as a provincial responsibility. Canada, similar to most other developed nations, does not have a national or federal administrative government authority overseeing education. Dunning (1997) stated that "Canada's

elementary and secondary schools are as diverse as the nation itself" (p. 21). This is true

of both public, private, and parochial schools throughout Canada including the Province

of Ontario. Ghosh and Ray (1995) depicted Canadians as being open to educational

reform and new ideas when they stated that

> Curriculum and pedagogical methods of Canadian education have been
> greatly influenced by French and British roots and American models.
> Schooling in Canada can in effect, be said to be an American child of
> European parents...Canadians probably cluster close to the ideological
> center in educational issues. That is to say, they are generally liberal in
> their views and receptive to new pedagogical styles and techniques, yet, at
> the same time, conservative in the standards and accountability they expect
> in schools. (p. 9)

Canadians and Americans value public institutions, recognize and celebrate

religious freedom, believe in the separation of church and state, allow private schools and

diversity in education (Bibby, 1993; Conn, 1988; Edmonds, 1981; Holmes, 1998;

Lewington & Orpwood, 1993). Independent or private schools comprise less than five

percent of all students and five percent of all schools in Canada (Bergen, 1989; Guppy &

Davies, 1998; Statistics Canada, 1999). Canadian private schools are granted the right to

be independent, but must provide programs of study that meet provincial standards in

order to grant graduation diplomas. Christian schools are very committed, both

financially and spiritually, to their students, teachers and the larger community. "In

Ontario, private schools receive no funding from the province or local taxpayer, and the

provision of education by private schools is not regulated" (Brown & Zuker, 1998, p. 50).

Although public schools continued to expound Christian values well into the

twentieth century, many Christian parents could not continue to rely on public and secular

schools to accommodate varied Christian-centered views of education. The influence of educators such as Horace Mann and John Dewey, the introduction of secular and humanist theories of education, and the slow erosion of Christian values across society transformed society's views about the role of religion in schools. These influences hastened the growth of the Christian school movement.

As evangelicals and fundamentalists began to realize that public schools were becoming more and more dominated by secular humanistic (allegedly anti-Christian) values, groups of concerned Christian parents in association with local churches began establishing their own independent and private Christian schools. These developments in the mid to late twentieth century created a patchwork of public and private, parochial, or religious schools throughout Canada, the United States, and the English-speaking world. Christian church groups and families realized that public schools could not

> ...be expected to inculcate and enforce ideals of character that are at variance with the dominant values of the community in a spiritually fragmented culture. Human worth, theft, cruelty, violence, drugs, vandalism, bullying, laziness, promiscuity, responsibility, mercy, charity, forgiveness, humility, modesty...are deeply rooted in religious teachings of right and wrong. (Sewall, 2000, p. 11)

The rapid growth of the Christian school movement in the early 1960s was attributed to a variety of factors including the desire of fundamentalist and conservative Christian communities to gain control over the education of their children "...to follow in the footsteps of sixteenth-century Protestant evangelicals" (Wagner, 1990, p. 20). The resurgence of the Canadian Christian school movement in the1980s is similar to movements in the United States. Parker (1982) attributes this growth to the increase of

interest of many different evangelical religious associations and churches in creating their own schools. A significant number of evangelical and conservative Christian communities were dissatisfied with public education, the civic and moral changes in society, the increasing secularization of religious thought and practice, and the rejection of liberal social policy. American and Canadian Christian schools were safe havens, faithfully supported by strong communities of believers. Christian schools eagerly positioned themselves at an arms-length distance from public educators, local, regional, provincial, and state governments.

In summary, Hull (1993) and Poyntz and Walford (1994) commented that religious schools are unique and provide an important educational alternative, yet they are far from being ideal as a place and community for learning. Reese (1993) in *Soldiers for Christ in the Army of God, the Christian School Movement in America* commented on the "...prevalent image of modern Christian schools as purely segregationist havens, is ...both inaccurate and unwarranted" (p. 275). The recent growth of the religious school movement, debates on the validity of the separation of church and state, the humanizing of core curriculums, and the place of religion in public schools all continue to be complex issues. Further, parents, as they became more vocal about their children's education fuelled the expansion and spread of religious schools as necessary and inevitable reactions.

Christian School Statistics

> Roughly 1 million youngsters are enrolled in some 20,000 international [*sic*] fundamentalist schools, and religious officials estimate that on an average three additional Christian academies open their doors every day. The bigger schools have their own buildings, but most are housed in

churches, often in basements. (Rose, 1984, p. 46)

The exact number of private religious schools, staff, and students is unknown. Inconsistent and conflicting definitions of religious, private, and parochial schools intermingled with data converging from different provincial and state agencies creates an unclear picture as to the number of Christian schools. The United States Department of Education in 1997-98 indicated that

> Catholic schools represent approximately one-third of all private schools in the United States while containing half of the private school students. The percentage of American private schools (less than 150 students) is over three times greater for other religious (72 percent) and nonsectarian (76 percent) schools than of Catholic schools (19 percent). (Broughman & Colaciello, 2001, p. 2)

Elementary (K-8) private schools comprise approximately 60% of all types of American private schools. Approximately 48% of these private schools are religious schools, 30% are Catholic schools, and 20% are conservative Christian schools. Conservative Christian schools comprise approximately 737,000 American students and 57,000 teachers (McLaughlin & Broughman, 1997).

Lois Sweet (1997), in her book *God in the Classroom: The Controversial Issue of Religion in Canada's Schools*, investigated the religious and Christian school movement in Canada. Sweet estimated that over the last 20 years, enrolment in religious schools has increased by 64% nationwide, while enrolment in public schools over the same time period decreased by 15%. Young and Levin (2002) indicated that determining the number of Christian schools throughout Canada and in each of Canada's provinces is difficult. The regulation, definition, and funding of private schools is not consistent from

province to province. However, there remains a strong tradition of Christian schools in most provinces coordinated by a mixed variety of association-affiliated and church-based organizations.

The Christian school movement remains strong in British Columbia, Alberta, and in Southern Ontario. Pasternak (1999) indicated that approximately 92,000 students across Canada are enrolled in 618 denominational and independent schools, of which about 80% are religious-based schools. Ontario provincial statistics gathered from a number of sources (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, 2001; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001) outlined in Appendix D indicate that Christian schools number less than 5% of all elementary schools, and that these schools comprise less than 2% of all elementary school students. It is estimated that at the time of this study there are approximately 15,000 students attending 258 private Christian elementary schools in the Province of Ontario.

Structure and Function

> An analysis of the Christian school literature revealed widespread
> unanimity among Christian school proponents regarding basic
> philosophical principles...divergence emerged regarding the specific
> interpretation and application of such principles. (Gleason, 1980, p. 46)

Many Christian schools follow similar guiding principles, organizational models, and pedagogy to deliver excellent education. Distinctive characteristics include relatively small schools, affiliations with local churches and Christian education associations, small school staff, a disproportionate high number of parent volunteers, school-specific governing boards, Christ-centered curriculum, faith-oriented staff, and a scripturally

based decision- making model. Staff sign 1-year contracts that include an oath or vow of Christian service and action. Principals as well as teachers tend to be paid relatively lower salaries, lack job security, have no retirement plans, fringe benefits, and earn on average only one half to one third of the salary of public school teachers and principals. Staff and students have a rigid dress code, hold themselves and their families to a Christian code of behaviour, and make considerable financial sacrifices in order to participate in the school. It is expected that students and staff will be loyal, honest, hard-working, punctual, and reliable. Christian schools may lack proper educational facilities including a gymnasium or auditorium. Students may also be separated by age and/or gender for instruction. A significant number of schools are new and growing and as independent and private schools "...struggle mightily to remain economically solvent" (Gleason, 1980, p. 2).

> Who would not be fascinated by a probing discussion of teachers who thankfully earn a salary that is less than half of what they would receive at public schools, yet who willingly drive the school buses themselves, attend up to half a dozen required religious services a week, and subscribe to standards of personal morality that would be austere for a Puritan? (Morris, 1988, p. 856)

Private Christian schools have common associations and denominational affiliations, but are independent entities. Schools are generally governed by a school board which appoints and directs a principal, teachers, and support staff. The school board is responsible for overseeing the school, resolving major issues, and protecting the financial, spiritual, and administrative aspects of the school. The school board usually consists of representatives of parents, staff, the principal, and, in church-based schools, the pastor and church deacons. Principals are positioned in a leadership role charged with

overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. A principal's typical day may involve: arriving early to open up the school, meeting with staff to exchange information and directions, leading a staff devotional and prayer, coordinating school opening exercises, filling in or teaching a class, resolving a whole host of problems and exercises, completing paperwork, meeting with the board, locking all the doors, and turning out the lights before leaving for the day.

Christian school organizations and scholars have produced manuals, handbooks, and guidelines to assist principals, boards, and staff in the fulfillment of their roles. These resources enumerate and review day-to-day general administrative, educational, and managerial responsibilities entrusted to principals (Deuink & Herbster, 1982, 1988; Elve, 1982; Enderlin, 1992; Evearitt, 1996; Thoburn, 1982). Selective handbooks assist principals dealing with governance issues (Christian Schools International, 1981; White, 1980), parents (Cummings, 1982), development of community (DeJong, 1982), management guidelines (DeJong, 1982; Demuth & Demuth, 1995a, 1995b; Floyd, 1986), finance (Deuink, 1985; Elve, 1984), school boards (Elve, 1980a, 1980b; Rice, 1986), classroom climate (Brodnax, 1992), and vision and development (Fennema, 1980; Nance, 1998; O'Donnell & Collins, 1999). Christian schools follow a hierarchical organizational model with the school board assuming ultimate authority and power. However, as with all private schools, parents play a large part in the life of every Christian school, assisting in fund-raising, volunteering, and supervising activities. Principals constantly juggle the demands of students and their parents as the largest stakeholders within the school community. Badley (1998), when asked to describe a good Christian school, comments:

I would claim that the most important aspect to ask about if we want to judge how Christian a school is, is the faith of the staff. Christianity is not a theory, it is lived life, a personal relationship between God and individuals. For a school to be Christian, this relationship must be real, and it must be visible. (p. 43)

Although stakeholders within Christian schools share common values and beliefs, the concept of school culture continues to be difficult to define and hard to operationalize (Bookbinder, 1992).

Voogd (1996) and Hollaar (1989) observed that Christian schools owe their existence to a commitment by their supporting communities to particular beliefs and faith assumptions. Christian religious private schools share a common Christian mission and worldview. A Christian mission or purpose is articulated in each school's promotional literature, constitution, or articles of incorporation and is lived out by all that are part of the school.

We believe that: Christian day schools make a vital contribution to the welfare of Canada and that choice of schooling is in the public interest, communicating the vision of normative Christian education is important for the welfare of Christian families everywhere, Christian schooling should be affordable for the average Canadian family, standards of excellence in school management, instructional design, and student performance are identifiable and achievable, and a flourishing Christian school always has a defined growth program. (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, 2003)

Christian schools are ultimately judged by Christian faith. Faith is defined as an attitude of belief by taking God at His Word and claiming His promises (Hebrews 11:1). Christian schools are also judged by their vision, and the strength of character of their principal, staff, and students. These qualities are reflected in an array of handbooks and guides used to evaluate good Christian schools (Andersen, 1995; Association of Christian

Schools International, 1983; Rossman, 1982). These studies document the place, position,

culture, status, and roles of principals serving in Christians schools.

Summary of Christian Private Schools

> The majority of parents who send their children to a Christian school do so
> solely because they want them to study in a social environment consistent
> with their religious beliefs....Describing a Christian school...may resemble
> a typical small-town school, but the similarities are for the most part
> superficial ones. It is the differences that are crucial, and they begin with
> the way in which the school defines its function as a school: Students are
> exhorted to know and obey what God enjoins them to do. In this way, the
> Holy Spirit will encompass them and enable them to live a spiritual life, a
> life whose actions communicate a resolve to reject the world, Satan's
> enticing domain in which secular humanism extols man rather than God as
> the measure of all things. Christians must be and must remain separate
> from the world -- in it but not of it....Separateness in dress, language,
> belief, and general conduct should be strikingly clear. (Teachout, 1986, pp.
> 66-68)

Principals are important school leaders positioned at the center of all school

activities and decisions. Immediately surrounding principals are parents, teachers, staff,

and students. School community and culture develops primarily through these important

stakeholders and the widening influence of school administrators, school board officials,

different levels of government, and society at large. As the Christian school community

grows so does the influence of the surrounding organizational culture. Christian schools

are not immune from worldly and secular influences and pressures. However, Christian

schools, not surprisingly, are characterized as having a strong and identifiable Christian

culture. This culture permeates everything within the school organization and eventually

dissipates beyond the borders of the Christian school community. Religious school

principals are central to this unique culture.

Summary of Chapter

A Christian school allows parents to fulfill the command of God to educate their children according to biblical principles and to obey the laws of the land at the same time. (Deuink, 1996b, p.32)

Religious school principals are driven by a vast array of tasks, demands, functions, expectations, and beliefs. Evans (1995) expresses this array of tasks when constructing a hypothetical job ad for a principal:

Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paper and work double shifts (75 nights a year). He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency. (p.4)

Christian schools, as unique social systems, profess and live out Christian values and beliefs. Henry Toews (2002), in a paper titled "Distinctives of a Christian School: Why a Christian School?" eloquently describes qualities that envelop Christian schools. These qualities can also be used to describe the distinctive qualities of men and women serving as principals in Christian school organizations. The qualities of principals are characterized as being Bible-based, Christ-centered, positive, truthful, sensitive, compassionate, constructive, transforming, committed followers of the Lord, and living a life worthy of imitation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This naturalistic inquiry utilized a variety of measures to investigate how principals perceived their roles as religious school leaders. This chapter describes the processes leading up to the selection of an appropriate research design. In addition, this chapter describes the setting of Niagara Christian schools, the limitations of the research design, and how data were collected, analyzed, and, safeguarded against bias.

Qualitative Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to explore how religious school principals defined the importance of their actual roles and responsibilities. A qualitative mixed-method research design was best suited for collecting data about religious school principals.

> Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks participants broad, general questions, collects the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images, and analyzes the information for description and themes. From these data, the research interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflections and past research. The final structure of the final report is flexible, and it displays the researcher's biases and thoughts. (Creswell, 2002, p. 648)

A qualitative research design would collect principals' comments, dialogue, and reflections to best define the culture of Christian schools. In addition, qualitative research designs would be sensitive to the social context in which data are produced. Qualitative research designs exploring educational subjects, use narrative analysis which emphasizes the stories principals tell and the first person accounts of their experiences. Qualitative

research methods also help people reading the study to see the worldview, complexity, detail, and context of religious school principals being studied using their own terms, descriptors, and language. Merriam (1998) conveyed this theme when stating that qualitative "...data are compressed and linked together in a narrative that conveys the meaning the researcher has derived from studying the phenomenon" (pp. 178-179).

This study as a naturalistic inquiry "...takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2004, p. 714). Participants are interviewed with open-ended questions with minimal constraints in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them (Guba, 1978; Patton, 2002).

Research methodologies used to investigate the transactional and transformative roles and behaviours of organizational leaders have utilized a variety of role-related normative scales and standards. Selective studies included a series of Harvard University National Principalship Studies (Dodd, 1965; Dreeben & Gross, 1965; Gross & Herriott, 1963; Gross & Trask, 1964) that investigated principals' primary roles, Ohio State's Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, 1963), University of Michigan's Survey of Organizations (Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950), Oregon University's study of principals' normative behaviours (Foskett, 1967), and most recently the development of principals' standards by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1997, 2001). Applying established standards, normative behaviours, and scales that describe public school principals within religious school settings would be revealing and beneficial. However, a more appropriate research

methodology exploring religious school principals' primary roles would incorporate established role standards, scales, or competencies that included a spiritual or religious dimension.

Ciriello's (1998) definition of Catholic principals' role-set as educational, managerial, and spiritual role models was selected for use in this study. Ciriello's role descriptions, competencies, and affiliated role behaviours for religious school principals were originally developed as part of a larger study of principals published in the multi-volume study *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders*. Role descriptions, although Catholic in application, upon close examination reflected general religious themes and experiences. Appendix E lists this role-set and affiliated competencies, responsibilities, and behaviours, and shows how they were modified with the permission of the United States Catholic Conference (Appendix F) to reflect Christian and not necessarily Catholic language and themes. Utilizing prescribed role classifications, language, and descriptions developed by Ciriello (1998) provided an established and credible basis to investigate other religious school principals.

The philosophical roots of the qualitative research design are based in symbolic interactionalism. The phenomenological principle of developing an understanding or *verstehen* of how principals make sense of their world was best accomplished by having them describe their everyday life experiences. How principals make sense of their world helps to determine what they do and why. Religious school principals who make sense of their world are better able to negotiate their roles and related competencies. Successful data assimilation was to be gathered using two different methodologies that documented

principals' comments (hermeneutic representation), using a survey instrument

(questionnaire) and a series of follow-up, in-depth interviews. The analysis (dialectic

representation) of survey data would identify common themes and patterns.

This investigation used an exploratory mixed-method descriptive research design

that collected mainly qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected by a survey

instrument asking principals to rank individual roles, responsibilities, and the frequency

of related behaviours. Qualitative data were collected by a survey questionnaire asking

school principals to comment on their roles. Additional qualitative data were collected by

recording and transcribing data from survey follow-up, in-depth interviews of Christian

education experts. Additional data generated through these in-depth interviews were

incorporated into the study as an additional layer of interpretation.

Research Design

A successful research design would gather as much descriptive data as possible,

allow principals to reflect on their experiences, accommodate religious school principals'

busy schedule, and overcome their reluctance to participate in academic research. Best

and Kahn (2003) commented on the unique nature of descriptive studies:

> A descriptive study describes and interprets what *is*. It is concerned with
> conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that
> are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is
> primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past
> events and influences as they relate to current conditions. (p. 114)

A two-phase multi-strategy or mixed-method research design was constructed

with this in mind. Quantitative and qualitative data were initially collected from a

purposive sample of principals using a mailed survey instrument. Qualitative data from a proposed follow-up focus group meeting of current and former Christian school principals were to be collected for further analysis. However, the focus group meeting as part of the original research design was eventually cancelled due to insufficient interest. An interview of three recognized Christian school educators reflecting on survey results provided an additional layer of interpretation. Christian school experts were identified by their peers by their published research, position with a Christian school organization, and distinguished service as former Christian school principals. Together, all phases of this descriptive study were designed to create a wealth of data necessary to explore religious school principals' roles, responsibilities, and surrounding school culture. The creation of a unique survey instrument and overall research design was endorsed by the Brock University Research Ethics Board (see Appendix G for permission letter) and was overseen by a faculty advisor.

As an exploratory, mixed-method research design, data were first collected using a mail-back questionnaire of elementary school principals situated in local Niagara Christian schools. The use of a questionnaire allowed for the relatively easy collection of primary data from principals at their convenience. A questionnaire was an excellent mechanism to collect data quickly from a geographically dispersed population. The questionnaire was designed to include a creative mixture of closed- and open-ended questions. Survey questions collected biographical data and comments from individual principals about their schools, and data on the importance, time devoted to, difficulty, and satisfaction of principals as educational, managerial, and spiritual leaders. Closed-ended

questions were utilized to elicit specific comments using a set of response options. The use of closed-ended questions aided in the uniform collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Open-ended questions provided a mechanism for participants to contribute original data. Although more difficult to analyze, open-ended questions provided data that were highly descriptive.

The questionnaire survey Letter of Introduction (Appendix H) and Questionnaire (Appendix I) were mailed to Niagara Christian elementary school principals in the Spring of 2002. The questionnaire was constructed in such a way as to elicit responses in a specific order. Principals were asked to respond to questions related to biographical and school data, followed by queries to produce data about principals' roles, related responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours. The order of questions easily guided participants into the survey instrument. All 35 questions were grouped together to collect principals' biographical data (10 questions), information about their school (11 questions), principals' roles (4 questions), responsibilities (4 questions), and behaviours (3 questions). To facilitate principals moving quickly through the questionnaire, participants were instructed to rank 3 prescribed roles, individually rate 9 responsibilities, and record the frequency of occurrence of 12 spiritual, 16 educational, and 17 managerial behaviours. All role-related descriptors were originally developed by Ciriello (1998) and modified for this study.

The questionnaire collected nominal data where appropriate to provide background information on principals and their schools. Ample space was provided to allow principals to include additional qualitative data after each set of questions. Several

survey questions presented principals with the opportunity to provide data about their personal experiences, beliefs, and values. Overall, the questionnaire was an essential component of this study. Results of the survey were analyzed and served as a basis for follow-up interview questions of selected Christian school expert educators.

The survey instrument was informally pre-tested by five colleagues familiar to me. These colleagues from Brock University and the Christian school movement were familiar with educational research and the social role of principals. The purpose of the pretest was to evaluate the survey instrument for ease of use, reliability, accuracy, validity, and language. A revised survey instrument, supporting documents, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to all recognized Niagara Christian schools to the attention of each school's principal. Considerable time and energy were spent encouraging participants to complete the survey in a timely manner. This involved a follow-up phone call, e-mail, or letter encouraging principals to complete and return the survey instrument. Collecting accurate data from as many Niagara Christian school principals as possible was essential to the success of the study.

The second phase of this study's research design collected data from recognized Christian education experts through a series of independent one-on-one interviews. The purposes of the interviews were to generate additional data and assist with the general interpretation of survey results. Interview participants were presented with a series of semistructured questions that incorporated the presentation of original survey data (Appendix J). The names of nine experts, scholars, and/or researchers were collected by me during the 2-year preliminary investigation and the formal phase of this study. Experts

Setting

Education, as outlined in the Canadian Constitution (British North America Act, 1867; Constitution Act, 1982), is a provincial responsibility. The Education Act (Ontario, Education Act, 1990) regulates educational activities in all of Ontario's 72 French and English language local school district boards that administer Ontario's 4,653 elementary (junior kindergarten to Grade 8) schools. Ontario's elementary schools are categorized as Public (2,568 or 55%), Roman Catholic (3,948 or 30%), or Private (705 or 15%; Appendix D). Ontario's private schools reflect a diverse mixture of parochial, boarding, religious, and special education organizations. Ontario's 705 private elementary schools include 258 (37%) Christian schools (Appendix D).

The Niagara Region is a distinct geographical area located in Southern Ontario, Canada (Map 1). Most cities located in the Region are within a 1-hour driving distance of the major metropolitan centers of Toronto, Ontario and Buffalo, New York. The Niagara Region, with four percent of Ontario's 11.8 million population, has 203 or four percent of Ontario's elementary schools, 28 or four percent of Ontario's private elementary schools, and 17 or seven percent of Ontario's Christian elementary schools (Appendix D). The Region at the time of this study did not include non-Christian religious private schools. A study of religious school principals within the Niagara Region was limited to protestant, private, religious elementary schools. Niagara's Christian schools are spread throughout the entire Region (Map 2). These schools vary in size and are either independent or are represented by a cross-section of six different

Map 1. Niagara Region.

Lake Ontario

Fruitland

Virgil

0   5   10 km
0   5   mi

N

Jordan Station
Jordan
St. Catharines

NEW
YORK

Smithville

Thorold

ONTARIO

Niagara
Falls

Niagara River

Wellandport

Welland Canal

Queen Elizabeth Highway

U.S.A.
CANADA

Dunnville

Fort Erie

CANADA
U.S.A.

Lake Erie
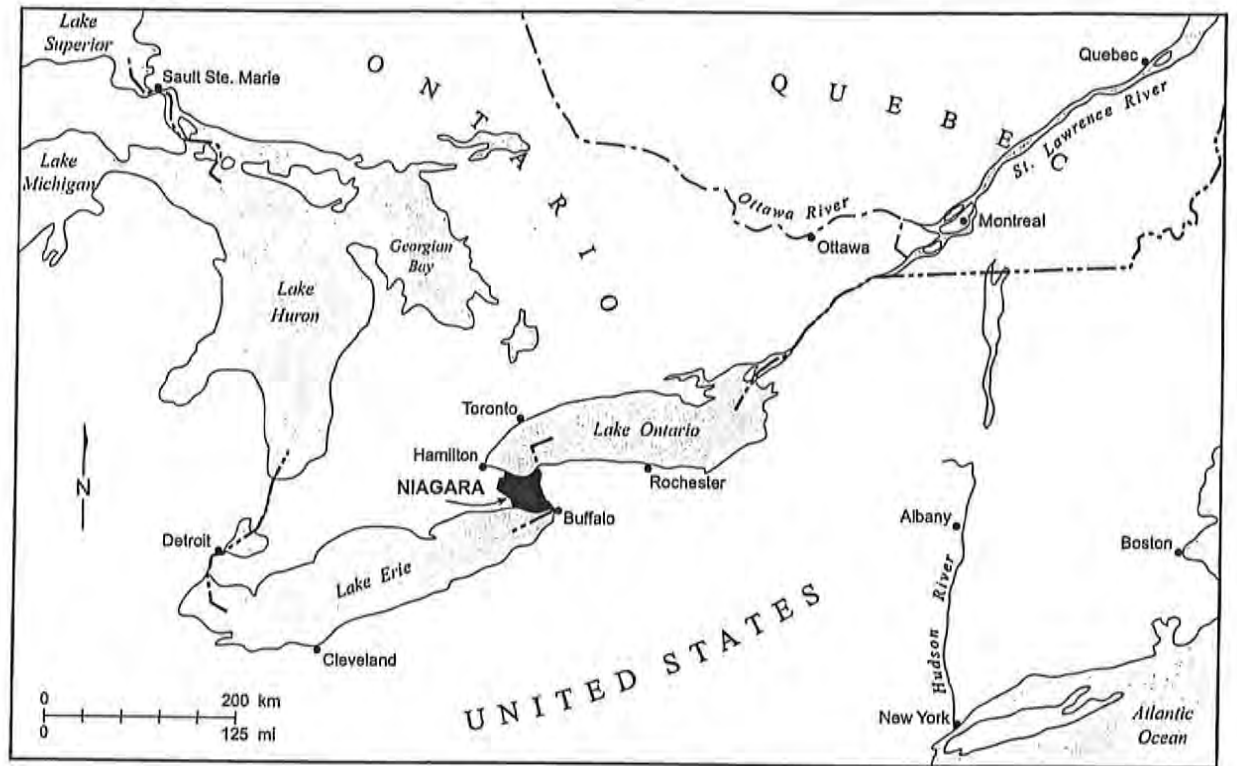
Map 2. Niagara Region Christian schools.

Christian school organizations (Appendix M).

For the sake of convenience, this study included a purposive sample of 17 principals from each of Niagara's Christian elementary schools. "Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The Ontario Ministry of Education's Private Elementary and Secondary Schools Directory (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001) documented the names and locations of all Niagara Christian schools. Niagara's Christian elementary schools represent a diverse group of governing associations, organizational cultures, and presumably school principals. The purpose of selecting principals serving in Niagara Christian schools was to increase the likelihood of principals completing the questionnaire and participating in the study's proposed follow-up focus group meeting. Appendix N identifies the names and locations of all 17 Niagara Christian schools used in this study.

Participants

Participants in this study were informed of their rights and responsibilities as outlined by the Brock University Research Ethics Board and incorporated in the study's research consent forms. All participants were very familiar with the Christian school movement, including current or former principals, and worked directly with individual Christian schools and their supporting organizations. A limited number of participants were known to me in an informal way prior to conducting the formal part of this study. All participants understood the status and position of principals within Christian

elementary schools. All participants were judged to be interested in exploring principals'
actual roles within religious school organizations.

Data Collection

This study used an exploratory two-phase research design that collected data using
a survey instrument and individual interviews. The survey instrument collected a full
range of data on principals' careers, schools, and actual roles from principals serving in
different Christian religious schools. All 17 Niagara Christian elementary schools were
contacted by phone prior to the mailing of the questionnaire to confirm the accuracy of
each school's principal and contact information. As a result of this investigation, 2 of the
17 registered Niagara Christian schools did not fit the definition of a school and were
dropped from this study. The remaining 15 Christian schools and their principals were
mailed a survey package that included a Letter of Introduction (Appendix H),
Questionnaire survey instrument (Appendix I), Questionnaire Informed Consent Form
(Appendix O), and a return, self-addressed stamped envelope.

Principals were directed by the survey's Letter of Introduction to read, sign, and
return the attached consent form, include supporting and promotional publications in
addition to the completed questionnaire. Principals, by reading and signing the consent
form, were determined to be informed of their rights and responsibilities. Survey
packages were mailed to all 15 principals in the Spring of 2002. The purpose of mailing
the survey just prior to the end of the school year was to allow principals the opportunity
to reflect on their experiences over an entire school year. Although school principals are

very busy at all times of the school year, it was observed that they may be least busy 1 to 2 months prior to the end of the school year.

The confidentiality of principals and their schools were protected at every stage of the study. Principals were asked not to identify themselves or their schools within the survey instrument. Personal and school names, information, and identifiable descriptions whether stated or implied were stripped from all survey data prior to analysis. In addition, this study was approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board and was overseen by a faculty advisor.

All 15 Niagara Christian elementary schools were contacted by phone 2 weeks after the initial mailing to confirm receiving a survey package. Principals who had not completed and returned the questionnaire within 4 weeks of the first mailing were contacted once again by phone or e-mail to confirm their participation in the study. Principals who had not responded within 6 weeks (which coincided with the second-last week of the school year) were once again contacted by phone or e-mail. Principals still willing to participate in the survey portion of the study were mailed a duplicate survey package which included a Revised Letter of Introduction (Appendix P). Principals who had not completed the questionnaire were instructed to complete the survey as soon as possible, but were given permission to return the questionnaire no later than the start of the next school year in September, 2002. Returned survey instruments were collected and set aside for further analysis. All 10 principals who had completed and returned the survey instrument and consent form were to be mailed a survey thank you letter (Appendix Q).

The search for experts eligible for interview purposes as part of the second stage of the study took approximately 3 years to complete. Potential participants were identified during the preliminary and formal stages of the study. Expert principals, researchers, educators, and administrators were identified through the professional, educational, Christian school literature, personal e-mailings, professional contacts, and through referrals by influential members of the Christian School movement. Potential expert interview participants represented a wide range of Christian and secular universities, colleges, denominations, and organizations. Potential participants were ranked according to their qualifications and suitability for interviewing. Each potential participant was individually contacted by e-mail or phone throughout the Fall of 2002 and Winter of 2003 and invited to participate in the study. Once an expert agreed to participate in the study, an informal e-mail message was sent to confirm his/her participation. Each expert was forwarded a package containing a formal Letter of Introduction (Appendix K), an Interview Consent Form (Appendix L), and a list of semi-structured questions (Appendix J). Data were collected from experts by telephone, e-mail, and personal on-site interviews throughout the Spring and Summer of 2003. Participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts of interviews to ensure their accuracy. The confidentiality of individual schools and names of all participants was rigorously protected at all stages of the study.

Data Analysis

The overall goal of the investigation was to define and describe religious school principals' actual roles. The descriptive study was not intended to generate grounded

theory and, as such, data analysis was designed to depict general themes, patterns, and relationships. The study was interpretive and constructive in nature and attempted to look at the world from an insider's perspective. Data analysis through the use of inductive reasoning attempted to describe multiple realities. As a hermeneutic study it was important, if not essential, to analyze data as context-specific, using each participant's descriptive language.

Data analysis occurred at two levels. Quantitative data from completed questionnaires asking principals to rank individual roles, responsibilities, and the frequency of behaviours were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures. The analysis of these data yielded rankings of what principals defined as important, difficult, satisfying, and time-consuming. Data were also analyzed that provided a brief description of religious school principals and their schools.

Quantitative data from survey questions asking principals to rank the importance of spiritual, educational, and managerial *roles* were analyzed using two descriptive measures. Role data were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures by listing, then ranking the frequency of 1) role choices and 2) role sequences. Scores were calculated as the frequencies individual principals identified roles as first, second, and third choices. The sequence of roles was calculated as the frequencies individual principals identified roles in a specific ranked order. The use of two measures to calculate overall role responsibilities was designed to increase the reliability of data within a small survey population.

Data from survey questions asking principals to rank the importance of all nine

role *responsibilities* were analyzed using two descriptive measures, including 1) role choice and 2) role sequence. Role choices were calculated using descriptive statistical measures by ranking the frequency of responsibilities chosen by individual principals. Role sequences were calculated by ranking the frequency of the top two responsibilities chosen by all principals. Overall scores were calculated by combining the rankings calculated by the two previously mentioned measures. The overall ranking of responsibilities was calculated by the ranking of calculated scores.

Data from survey questions asking principals to rank the frequency of role *behaviours* were analyzed using the three descriptive measures. These included the measure of role choice and two measures of role sequences. Role behaviours were ranked by the total value of all selected ratings for each responsibility. Totals were calculated using a Likert-type scale value points scheme where 5 = *always*, 4 = *often*, 3 = *occasionally*, 2 = *rarely*, and 1 = *never*. Role choices were calculated by adding the value of behaviours chosen by individual participants. The first measure of role sequence was calculated by adding, then ranking the total number of times each behaviour was selected as the Likert scale value of *always*. The second measure of role sequence was calculated by adding, then ranking the total number of times each behaviour was selected as either *always* or *often*. Overall scores specific to each of the principals' leadership roles were calculated by combining the rankings calculated by three previously mentioned measures. The purpose of using three measures to determine overall rankings was to limit the impact of participant error and bias within a small survey population. The purpose of ranking role-related descriptors was to generate general patterns within the range of all

participants' responses. The overall ranking of behaviours was calculated by the ranking of calculated scores.

Qualitative data transcribed from survey comments, replies to open-ended questions, and follow-up interviews were analyzed together for emergent themes and general patterns as prescribed by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Merriam (1998). Data were initially coded and labelled to depict general themes. Subsequent levels of coding identified patterns that seemed to be held by all participants. Emergent patterns that related to principals' roles as school educational, managerial, and spiritual leaders were identified and labelled by language consistent with data presented by participants.

Safeguarding the Credibility of the Study

The study strictly observed the standards established by the Brock University Research Ethics Board. Permission to proceed with the research was granted by the Board as indicated by the letter included as Appendix G. Information communicating participants' rights, obligations, and responsibilities was incorporated in participants' consent forms. Contact information was included in all consent forms and letters.

As an emergent, inductive, and opportunistic ethnographic study, I attempted to maintain a distant relationship from all participants. The study did not involve building trust or relationships with any participants outside normal qualitative research protocols. Data collected by the survey instrument, expert interviews, and unstructured observation respected all participants as autonomous discrete units. Participants were assumed to be literate, honest, and capable of expressing their own thoughts. As leaders within their

schools, religious school principals were assumed to be in the best position to represent their school, and reflect on their actual roles and the surrounding school culture.

Survey packages were sent to all participants with instructions to complete, sign, and return an enclosed consent form. This procedure was replicated with all 3 expert interview participants. To secure the identity of participants, survey documents containing responses were assigned a letter designation from A to M in random order. Data transferred from survey instruments and interviews were not linked to individual principals or their schools. Data were not published in any case where participants or their schools could be identified. Similarly, any discussions about the data in this study referred to principals as *a participant* or as *the participants*.

Error and bias may have been introduced by the investigator, survey instrument, and interview questions. Definitions of key concepts, terms, and measures were not defined by myself nor communicated to participants prior to their participation. Language used in the study reflected nothing more or less than that implied by general conceptual definitions. Identified roles, responsibilities, and behaviours were not mutually exclusive and may not have been representative of normative or idealized Christian school principals.

The study was not directly concerned with causal factors in identifying and ranking principals' roles, areas of responsibilities, or role complexity. Principals were not given the opportunity to identify different role descriptors or role-sets other than those developed by Ciriello (1998). There are few commonly agreed-upon procedures to test the reliability and validity of data collected by such an exploratory mixed research design.

Triangulation of observations of data in agreement with other sources, researchers, and data-collecting procedures was not possible. Christian school experts were interviewed and asked to comment on the validity and trustworthiness of survey data. Collecting data using two different qualitative techniques may have helped establish data trustworthiness.

Relying on a small subset of participants for a major part of the data, the study provides no guarantee that participants' views were typical or could exhibit a greater uniformity in data that actually existed. The modest number of participants used in this study may have limited the extent that results could be generalized to other principals and school organizations. Caution must be exercised by the reader in making general inferences when interpreting results. As a qualitative research design "...the main threat to valid interpretation is imposing one's own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied and the meanings they attach to their words and actions" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 98-90). Every attempt was made to ensure that the coding and interpretation of data was conducted to reflect the perspective of all participants.

Safeguards were used to insure that data were collected in an unbiased fashion abiding by well established guiding principles for qualitative research studies (Cresswell, 1994; Maxwell, 1996; Neuman, 2000). The use of a multi-strategy research design allowed for the cross-checking of results between different phases of the study. A multi-strategy research design provided a mechanism to capture data missed by different phases of the study. Protocols used to minimize observer bias included minimizing personal contact whenever possible, clearly stating the purpose of the research study, documenting

and stating clear instructions and expectations to all participants. Observer bias

> ...may arise out of unconscious assumptions or preconceptions harbored by
> the researcher -- the unreflective acceptance of the values, attitudes, and
> practices of one's own culture as somehow normative, leading to the
> inability to see, let alone understand, behaviors that do not conform to that
> norm. (Angrosino, 2004, p. 757)

The insights gained and knowledge obtained from the 2-year informal

investigation were essential to understanding how principals thought, what they valued,

and their self-perceptions about their unique roles. These experiences were important

when analyzing and interpreting data and conducting expert interviews. They assisted me

in retaining a principal's focus when choosing labels, and analyzing data for general

themes, trends, and patterns. This was a critical piece of this study.

Limitations

Although not without its detractors, the use of role theory continues to be an

acceptable mechanism to understand principals within school settings.

> Role is a key concept in sociological theory. It highlights the social
> expectations attached to particular statuses or social positions and analyses
> the working of such expectations. Role theory was particularly popular
> during the mid-twentieth century, but after sustained criticism came to be
> seen as flawed, and substantially fell out of use. However the concept of
> role remains a basic tool for sociological understanding. (Role, 1998, p.
> 570)

This study was delimited by four main factors. First, limitations inherent in social

role theory as a means to observe, describe, and evaluate principals' primary roles may

have contributed to the collection of inaccurate data not representative of religious school

principals. Lipham (1988) commented that social role theory may contribute to research

participants falsely communicating grandiose claims about the validity of their positions. Goffman (1959) recognized that participants, when reflecting on their dramatic realization of roles, tend to idealize their actual and perceived roles. Biddle (1992) commented that concepts related to roles can be misinterpreted. Confusion and bias may have contributed to the collection of inaccurate data due to the inconsistent use and application of role-related terminology by all participants.

The second main limitation of this study was the relatively small number of religious school principals and experts agreeing to participate in the study. The limited number of participants may have introduced opinions and beliefs that were not representative of all religious school principals. The use of a purposive sample, although aiding in the selection of principals excluded principals, from other regions, private, Catholic, and non-Christian school communities. These limitations may have limited the extent to which the results could be generalized.

The third main factor limiting the validity and reliability of data collected from religious school principals involved the equal weighting of data collected from all participants. Data collected from each participant were given equal weight within this study irrespective of the number of years of service, experience, basic qualifications, and overall effectiveness of the participants as current or former principals. Although religious school principals come in all shapes, sizes, gender, backgrounds, and religious denominations they all share similar distinctive leadership characteristics. James Deuink "...identifies three key characteristics of good leaders: 1) Their spirituality extends beyond their personal needs, 2) they encourage others to develop their God-given talents, and 3)

they know they can't do everything themselves" (Slaybaugh, 2004, p. 3). However, there remains a wide variance in the style, practice, organizational culture, and expectations of principals serving in different religious schools. These variances were not measured and as such may have introduced bias in the data collected and its interpretation.

The fourth main limitation of this study was the problem of introducing bias to the analysis and interpretation of data by the principal investigator. This study is permeated with references to Scripture, Christian themes, values, beliefs, and expectations. Observers reading this study could infer that Christian school principals are best understood within a religious and theological context, rather than an educational frame of reference. As a practicing Christian, I was in an excellent position to understand and interpret in a limited way what it meant to be a Christian serving in the principalship. Although the principal investigator's Christian (or non-Christian) bias may have been introduced into the research, every attempt was made to see the participants in an unbiased way. However, the study's observations, findings, and interpretations may have been compromised by the biased perspective of a Christian observing other Christians.

Reviewers of classic studies of Christian schools (Parsons, 1987; Rose, 1988; Wagner, 1990, 1995) questioned the validity and objective perspective of Christians investigating other Christians in Christian school organizations. Reviewers of Peshkin's (1986) ethnographic study of Christian schools titled *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School* (Appleby, 1989; Green, 1992; McLaren, 1987; Morris, 1988; Teachout, 1986) raised this problem. Peshkin, as a non-Christian, spent approximately 2 years observing and participating in the life of a fundamentalist Baptist

church school. Peshkin, in this ethnographic study described the unique culture of Christian schools.

> The school culture to outsiders is a world totally unlike any other ever known...an invitation to everyone present to consider whether they were saved, right with the Lord, in the Word, etc...a regular calling of attention to one's relationship with the Lord was accompanied by daily, frequent prayers... (Peshkin, 1986, p. 17)

Teachout (1986) echoed these sentiments when describing Christian schools as resembling

> ...a typical small-town school, but the similarities are for the most part superficial ones. It is the differences that are crucial, and they begin with the way in which the school defines its function as a school: Students are exhorted to know and obey what God enjoins them to do. In this way, the Holy Spirit will encompass them and enable them to live a spiritual life, a life whose actions communicate a resolve to reject the world, Satan's enticing domain in which secular humanism extols man rather than God as the measure of all things. Christians must be and must remain separate from the world -- in it but not of it....Separateness in dress, language, belief, and general conduct should be strikingly clear. (pp. 67-68)

Peshkin's varied descriptions of Christian schools were confirmed by this study. However, every attempt was made to protect against researcher-bias infiltrating the study's findings and conclusions.

The study's research methodology did not incorporate direct observation as a means to collect real and accurate data. The use of a survey questionnaire may have limited the quality of data gathered for further analysis and interpretation. The lack of agreement of operational definitions of key terms and concepts may have contributed to a lack of consensus on how role-related terms were to be used in this study. Contextually,

principals' roles identified in this study were not mutually exclusive, defied clear descriptions, and were based on data provided by all participants. A more developed research methodology could have included key definitions and the perceptions of other members of the Christian school community to collect balanced data for further analysis and interpretation.

The study was not directly concerned with causal factors in the identification and ranking of task priorities for the principalship. The validity of the study was driven by the strengths and limitations of the survey instrument and follow-up interviews. Noting that the survey may be subject to less than a 100% return rate, the opinions and perceptions of principals who chose not to be included in this study may have also affected the results of this study.

This survey research design demanded that respondents slot their experiences, feelings, and values into designated categories. This could have been perceived as impersonal and mechanistic. Utilizing predetermined categories, definitions, and descriptions could have "...distorted what respondents really mean or experienced by so completely limiting their response choices" (Patton, 1990, p. 289). However, setting survey questions based on predetermined principals' roles originally developed by Ciriello (1998) were essential to bringing structure and flow to the collection and interpretation of data.

Finally, bias may have also been introduced by the principal investigator's belief systems, familiarity, and experiences with Christian school principals, administrators, parents, teachers, pastors, and students. My interest and superficial knowledge of

religious school organizations was viewed as a contributing strength of the study and not a limitation.

Summary

This investigation used an exploratory mixed-method descriptive research designed to explore religious school principals' understanding about their actual roles as school leaders. The rationale of not relying on a single research design was to enhance the validity or confidence of the study's findings. The development of a two-phase research design assisted in the triangulation of measurements to gain a full range of comments, opinions, and perceptions. The mixed methodology increased the number and variety of mechanisms able to collect data from a small and diverse population of principals serving in Niagara's religious schools. Data were collected through participant responses using a self-reflective survey questionnaire that included closed- and open-ended questions. Data from the survey as a second phase of the study were explored by three experts familiar with the religious school movement and school principals' roles. The analysis of all data defined the nature and variability of principals' roles in an attempt to paint a picture and create lasting images of principals serving in religious school organizations.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to describe how principals serving in religious private schools defined their primary roles. The questionnaire used in the study asked principals from a cross-section of Christian schools to reflect on the importance of their actual roles, responsibilities, and the frequency of related behaviours. Experts familiar with the Christian school movement were asked to validate and comment on survey results by responding to a series of semistructured questions. Subpurposes of this study were threefold. The first subpurpose was to identify what principals in religious schools identified as satisfying, time-consuming, and difficult as important role models. The second subpurpose was to identify the occurrence of role complexity as perceived by principals themselves. The third subpurpose was to depict a social systems model that described religious school principals' different role elements.

This chapter restates procedures involved with the collection and interpretation of information from all participants. Findings are presented that describe religious school principals' actual roles and role performance and comment on role complexity. In addition, participants commented on principals' biographical characteristics, career paths, and schools. Working concepts of the roles of principals were shaped with the aid of metaphorical themes. This chapter concludes with the presentation of a Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model that depicts how principals' roles, responsibilities, and behaviours are interrelated in religious school organizations.

Restatement of the Problem

Principals are constantly redefining their roles, responsibilities, and behaviours in

an era of accountability, change, and innovation (Fullan, 1996, 2003). Principals who understand their roles and related competencies can position themselves to be better school leaders. How do principals describe their roles? How are these roles defined? Is there evidence of role complexity or role ambiguity? This study attempted to describe how one specialized group of principals, that is, religious school principals, interpreted their roles not only as managerial and educational leaders, but most importantly as spiritual leaders.

This research investigated principals' actual roles from the perspective of principals serving in Niagara's private Christian elementary schools. Principals positioned at the centre of these school organizations are in the best position to observe and articulate their roles, change, complexity, and the culture that surrounds their roles as religious school leaders. Ultimately, this descriptive study may add to the small body of research on religious school leaders, bring meaning and understanding to their complex roles, and describe these principals as important constituents of their school organizations.

Data Collection

This study used a two-phase research design that derived data from a survey of religious school principals and follow-up interviews with religious school education experts. All survey participants were asked to provide information about their schools, school culture, and the roles of Christian elementary school principals. Survey information was collected from May to September 2002. Follow-up interview information was collected from March to August 2003.

The Directory of Private Elementary and Secondary Schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001) identified 17 Christian schools located in the Regional Municipality of Niagara, Ontario. Niagara private Christian elementary schools were geographically spread throughout the Region (Appendix R) and represented a cross-section of different Christian school organizations (Appendix M). Appendix N identifies the names and locations of all 17 schools.

Upon further investigation it was determined that 2 of the 17 Niagara private Christian schools did not fit the classic definition of a regular school and were dropped from the study. Principals in the remaining 15 Christian schools were mailed a survey package that included a copy of the survey instrument in the Spring of 2002 (Appendix I). Principals were asked to return completed questionnaires as soon as possible, but deadlines were extended throughout the Summer of 2003. After exhausting all possibilities to increase the number of principals completing and returning the questionnaire, phase one of this study was completed in September 2002. Ten of 15 or 66% of principals participated in the survey portion of the study. In addition to returning completed survey instruments, principals forwarded promotional literature about their schools and affiliated organizations.

Upon the completion of the survey portion or phase one of the study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected from individual survey instruments. Comments recorded on survey instruments that included school names, information, or descriptions, whether stated or implied, that could identify individual principals or schools were stripped from the data. Participating principals were identified as *participants* and given a

randomly assigned letter A through M. Quantitative data obtained through asking

principals to rank individual roles, responsibilities, and the frequency of behaviours were

analyzed using descriptive statistical measures to calculate scores and rankings.

Qualitative data, which comprised survey participants' comments on their roles were

transcribed. The analysis of survey quantitative data was used to develop a series of

semistructured questions for follow-up expert interviews (Appendix J).

Current and former religious school principals, administrators, educators, and

researchers were consulted throughout the entire study period. Nine Christian education

experts were identified as potential candidates to be interviewed. Three of the nine

experts agreed to be interviewed throughout the Spring and Summer of 2003 as phase two

of this study. Interviews were conducted using a series of semistructured questions

(Appendix J). Data from interviews were transcribed and to qualitative data from survey

instruments.

Participating Christian school experts were identified as *participants* and given a

randomly assigned letter A through M. Expert interview data were checked for accuracy

and stripped of information that could identify individual participants. All participants

were given the opportunity to review transcripts of interviews to ensure their accuracy.

Phase two of this study was completed in August 2003.

Qualitative data transcribed from surveys and interviews were analyzed together

to identify how principals viewed their roles as school leaders. Analysis of data for

emergent themes and general patterns was used as prescribed by Bogdan and Biklen

(1998) and Merriam (1998). Data were initially coded and labelled to depict general

themes. Subsequent levels of coding identified patterns that seemed to be held by all participants. Emergent patterns that related to principals' roles as school leaders were identified and labelled by language consistent with data presented by all participants.

Findings

Participants were asked to reflect on the importance of religious school principals' actual roles, responsibilities, and frequency of related behaviours. In addition, participants were asked to comment on principals' role performance, complexity, and profiles as school leaders, and to provide biographical information and information about their schools. One of the most important findings was the extent of agreement among all participants about the importance principals as religious school leaders. There was a consensus by Christian school principals and experts on the nature, importance, difficulty, and time devoted to principals' primary roles. The accuracy of these perceptions is reported below.

Niagara Christian School Principals' Roles

Niagara Christian school principals fulfilling their actual roles as school leaders clearly viewed themselves first and foremost as spiritual leaders (Table 1). Seventy percent of principals ranked their roles from most to least important as spiritual, educational, and managerial leaders. Seventy percent of principals viewed their most important role as spiritual leaders, while the same percentage viewed their secondary role as educational leaders and 90% of principals viewed their third or least important role as managerial leaders (Table 2).

Role-related responsibilities identified as most important listed in decreasing

Table 1

Niagara Christian School Principals' Importance of Roles - Role Sequences

	Role Sequence	Frequency
	A B C	7
	B A C	2
	B C A	1

Note:	A Spiritual leader	
	B Educational Leader	N = 10
	C Managerial Leader	

Role sequence = most to least important

Table 2

Niagara Christian School Principals' Importance of Roles - Rankings

Roles	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	N
Spiritual Leader	7	2	1	10
Educational Leader	3	7	0	10
Managerial Leader	0	1	9	10

Note: N total number of participants

order of importance included: leadership, faith development, curriculum and instruction,

building Christian community, and personnel management (Table 3). Responsibilities

identified as most important included a mixture of spiritual and educational

responsibilities. Participants' comments on their perception of principals' actual roles

included:

> Be a leader academically and spiritually, lead by words and example, be a support to the faculty so that they can perform to the best of their abilities. (Participant A)

> ...provide Christian leadership to teachers and students alike. Through my leading we set expectations for student behaviours in order to create a peaceful, cooperative, respectful learning environment. ...provide educational leadership for teachers. This is done through regular staff meetings to discuss curriculum, teaching strategies, and evaluation. Educational leadership also involves supervising programs and assessing their effectiveness. It also includes mentoring, counseling, advising, and encouraging. It includes professional development. ...provide a well-run school. Managing meetings, interviews, inquiries, special events, and well-kept facilities. I must ensure that we excel in completing the educational goals of the school. (Participant B)

> ...ensure that children entrusted into the staff's care receive quality, Christian education. -- run the school efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the children, staff, parents, and community -- support the staff, help them in professional development, in staff development, and in their effectiveness in the classroom -- ensure that all the health and safety as well as educational needs of each student are met to the best of our ability, also in the area of special needs -- develop an atmosphere of trust, care, and order among students, staff, and in the supporting community. (Participant E)

> Serve the staff by providing a workplace which they feel comfortable working in. Serve the parents in guaranteeing a wonderful environment for their children and listening to their concerns. This is accomplished by establishing procedures that cause the school to run smoothly and by treating children, parents, staff, and board members with respect. It also takes a lot of prayer! (Participant F)

Table 3

Niagara Christian School Principals' Responsibilities - Importance

A	B	C	D
1	2	e	Leadership
2	3	s	Faith Development
3	4	e	Curriculum and Instruction
4	6	s	Building Christian Community
4	6	m	Personnel Management
5	8	s	Moral and Ethical Development
6	9	m	Institutional Management
7	11	m	Finance and Development
8	13	s	History and Philosophy

Note: A rank   ranking of responsibilities
B score   calculated score
C role   s spiritual role   e educational role   m managerial role
D   area of Responsibility

N = 9

Provide competent, professional leadership and direction. Assume
responsibility for the entire operation of the school. (Participant H)

Serve the board by following through on our Mission Statement...to build
strong futures on a firm foundation through a Christ-centered education
where students are encouraged to achieve academic excellence in a
nurturing and supportive environment. (Participant I)

Principals are ideally perfect role models. We are perceived as religious
leaders, educators, and managers by parents, board members, faculty, staff,
and students. This is a difficult standard to meet as...experienced head
teachers. (Participant L)

Principals as spiritual leaders. Participants were asked why they perceived

religious school principals as important spiritual school leaders. Selective replies

included:

Remember that the spiritual dimension permeates all aspects of our work
in a Christian school. (Participant A)

As a Christian principal in a Christian school overseeing a Christian
curriculum...principals have the responsibility to ensure that Christ is
everywhere...using His Word, meditating on His presence, and being led
by qualified Christian teachers. (Participant B)

Focus of a Christian school must be spiritual. (Participant C)

Principals perform all three roles -- it takes time to manage staff, prepare
and meet with the school board, hire, train, and evaluate staff, etc.
...dealing with ongoing problems takes more time than planned.
(Participant D)

I am an educator, not a pastor or elder or parent. I find the distinction
difficult. Hopefully I integrate all three roles. (Participant F)

Principals in Christian schools are businessmen, arbitrators,
administrators, and entrepreneurs. Each responsibility takes considerable
amounts of personal and professional time. (Participant P)

...spiritual leadership permeates the other two *roles*. It is part of what I am
and what we stand for. As a principal, I provide spiritual leadership of the

staff in much the same way that a teacher provides spiritual leadership for her class. (Participant H)

Principals as school leaders set the spiritual tone of the entire school. Staff look to principals for spiritual leadership...Christian school principals are given a vision from God to lead as Jesus led, teach as Jesus taught, serve as Jesus served, disciple as Jesus discipled...setting a high standard. (Participant I)

I do believe that ranking in order doesn't always work nor is it correct. Being a spiritual leader coexists with my job as educational leader. Any managerial items that can be delegated to a vice principal or secretary make me more efficient... (Participant L)

The primary purpose of the school is educational in nature. The role of the principal is to ensure that this purpose is met. The spiritual and managerial qualities of the principal shape the kind of educational leader. (Participant M)

The two most important responsibilities associated with principals as spiritual leaders included faith development and building Christian community (Table 3). Participants were asked to comment on how principals' responsibilities of faith development and building a Christian community were both important and satisfying as spiritual leaders. Selective replies included:

We are a big family where community is very important. (Participant D)

Building a Christian school takes trust, commitment, teamwork, heart, funds, and above all faith...a lot of faith. (Participant D)

Deepening the faith of students and teachers is an important responsibility. It uses all your talents and gifts. It means being an important role model. ...taking responsibility for your own growth as well as those of students. Faith is a potent and powerful force...without faith it is impossible to please God. (Participant G)

Building Christian character and faith is rooted in the knowledge and truth ...Christian education can change lives. This is a big responsibility shared by the entire school community. Principals lead and direct... (Participant

L)

I see faith development in the many activities of Christian schools starting with the teachers setting important examples, guests in chapel giving testimonies, parents sacrificially giving to the school and their children, principals building schools for eternal benefits...making a difference when not knowing the rewards or future benefits...knowing that you can only do so much...letting the Holy Spirit complete the task. (Participant L)

Principals' roles as spiritual school leaders were expressed by 12 role-related behaviours (Ciriello, 1998). Principals ranked the most frequently expressed spiritual role-related behaviours as: Integrates gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies, and life of the school; Facilitates the moral developments and maturity of children, youth, and adults; Ensures quality Christian religious instruction of students (Table 4).

Principals as educational leaders. Principals of religious schools ranked the role of educational leader secondary in importance to their role as a spiritual leader (Table 2). The most important role-related responsibility determined by principals as educational leaders was leadership (Table 3). Principals' roles as educational school leaders were expressed by 16 role-related behaviours (Ciriello, 1998). Principals ranked the most frequently expressed educational role-related behaviours as: Applies a Christian educational vision to the daily activities of the school; Promotes healthy staff morale; Demonstrates symbolic and cultural leadership skills in developing a school climate, reflecting Christian identity (Table 5).

Principals as managerial leaders. Principals of religious schools ranked the role of managerial leader least important (Table 2). The two most important responsibilities

Table 4

Frequency of Niagara Christian School Principals' Behaviours as Spiritual Leaders

A	B	C	D
1	3	fd	Integrates gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies, and life of the school.
2	5	m&ed	Facilitates the moral developments and maturity of children, youth, and adults.
3	8	fd	Ensures quality Christian religious instruction of students.
4	10	bcc	Promotes Christian community.
4	10	h&p	Develops and implements statements of school philosophy and mission that reflect the unique Christian character of the school.
5	12	fd	Nurtures the faith development of faculty and staff through opportunities for spiritual growth.
6	14	fd	Provides opportunities for the school community to celebrate faith.
7	15	h&p	Utilizes church documents and Christian guidelines and directives.
8	16	bcc	Recognizes, respects, and facilitates the role of parents as primary educators.
8	16	fd	Supports and fosters consistent practices of Christian service.
9	18	h&p	Knows the history and purpose of the Christian schools in Canada.
10	20	bcc	Fosters collaboration between the church and the school.

Note:

A   Ranking of Behaviours - most to least frequent

B   Score - calculated using three measures

C   Area of Responsibility   fd faith development   bcc building Christian community

                              m&ed moral and ethical development   h&p history and philosophy

D   Spiritual Behaviour

Table 5

Frequency of Niagara Christian School Principals' Behaviours as Educational Leaders

A	B	C	D
1	3	1	Applies a Christian educational vision to the daily activities of the school.
1	3	1	Promotes healthy staff morale.
2	5	1	Demonstrates symbolic and cultural leadership skills in developing a school climate reflecting Christian identity.
3	7	c&i	Demonstrates an understanding of a variety of educational and pedagogical skills.
4	10	c&i	Demonstrates the ability to evaluate the general effectiveness of the learning program of the school.
5	12	c&i	Provides leadership in curriculum development, especially for the integration of Christian values.
5	12	1	Attends to personal growth and professional development.
6	14	1	Recognizes and fosters leadership ability among staff members.
6	14	c&i	Supervises instruction effectively.
7	17	c&i	Demonstrates a knowledge of the content and the methods of religious education.
7	17	c&i	Recognizes and accommodates the special learning needs of children within the inclusive classroom.
8	20	1	Interprets and uses research to guide action plans.
8	20	1	Identifies and effects needed change.
8	20	c&i	Knows of the developmental stages of children and youth.
9	24	c&i	Demonstrates an understanding of effective procedures for evaluating the learning of students.
10	25	c&i	Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences.

Note: A – Ranking of Behaviours - most to least frequent

B – Score - calculated using three measures

C – Area of Responsibility   1 leadership   c&i curriculum and instruction

D – Educational Behaviour

associated with principals as managerial leaders were personnel and institutional

management (Table 3). Principals' roles as managerial school leaders were expressed by

17 behaviours (Ciriello, 1998). Participants ranked the most frequently expressed

managerial role-related behaviours as: Provides for an ordinary school environment and

promotes student self-discipline; Understands Christian school governance structures and

works effectively with school boards; Understands provincial requirements and

government-funded programs; Evaluates staff (Table 6).

Niagara Christian School Principals' Role Performance

The first subpurpose was to identify what principals in religious schools

identified as satisfying, time-consuming and difficult as important role models.

Satisfying. Principals reported satisfaction in their roles and responsibilities as

school leaders. The most satisfying responsibilities listed in decreasing order of

satisfaction included: building Christian community, faith development, personnel

management, and institutional management (Table 7).

Time Consuming. Principals spent the greatest portion of their time as managerial

leaders, while lesstime was devoted to educational duties and the least amount of time to

their roles as spiritual leaders (Table 8). Data for time devoted to roles was adjusted by

excluding instances when principals indicated 0 or 100% for any one of the three primary

roles (Table 9). The thrust of a Christian school principal's job involvesexposure to all

three roles and responsibilities on a daily basis. The weighting of these factors certainly

varies among principals, but there is rarely (or hypothetically never) a situation where

even one of the aforementioned role elements is excluded or consumes 100% of their

Table 6

Frequency of Niagara Christian School Principals' Behaviours as Managerial Leaders

A	B	C	D
1	3	im	Provides for an ordinary school environment and promotes student self-discipline.
2	5	im	Understands Christian school governance structures and works effectively with school boards.
3	7	im	Understands provincial requirements and government-funded programs.
4	10	pm	Evaluates staff.
4	10	pm	Manages conflicts effectively.
5	11	pm	Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and the church.
5	11	im	Understands the usefulness of current technologies.
6	12	im	Recruits, interviews, selects, and provides an orientation for school staff.
6	12	f&d	Provides for development in the broadest sense, including effective public relations programs (church, and broader community) and school marketing program.
7	13	pm	Knows and applies the skills of organizational management, delegation of responsibilities, and communication skills.
7	13	f&d	Demonstrates skills in planning and managing the school's financial resources toward developing and monitoring an annual budget.
8	15	f&d	Seeks resources and support beyond the school and church.
9	19	pm	Uses group processes skills effectively with various school committees.
10	21	im	Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and religious congregation(s).
10	21	im	Knows civil law and regulations as it applies to Christian school.
11	25	f&d	Understands the basic strategies of long-range planning and applies them in developing plans for the school.
12	28	pm	Knows and applies principles of adult learning and motivation.

Note: A   Ranking of Behaviours - most to least frequent

B   Score - calculated using three measures

C   Area of Responsibility   pm personal management   im institutional management   f&d finance and development

D   Managerial Behaviour

Table 7

Niagara Christian School Principals' Responsibilities - Satisfaction

A	B	C	D
1	2	s	Building Christian Community
2	4	s	Faith development
3	5	m	Personnel Management
3	5	m	Institutional Management
4	7	e	Curriculum and Instruction
4	7	s	Moral and Ethical Development
4	7	e	Leadership
5	10	s	History and Philosophy
6	12	m	Finance and Development

Note: A Ranking of responsibilities - most to least frequent   N = 9
  B Score
  C Role   s spiritual role   e educational role   m managerial role
  D Area of Responsibility

Table 8

Niagara Christian School Principals' Time Devoted to Roles - Role Sequences

Role Sequence			Frequency
A	B	C	
100	100	100	3
20	40	40	2
10	40	50	2
25	35	40	1
0	80	20	1

Note:	A spiritual	
	B educational	N = 9
	C managerial	

Role sequence = greatest to least time

Table 9

Niagara Christian School Principals' Time Devoted to Roles - Percentage of Actual Time

Roles	A	B	C	D	N
Spiritual Leader	43	25	0	100	9
Educational Leader	64	40	35	100	9
Managerial Leader	60	50	20	100	9
Spiritual Leader *	17	20	10	25	5
Educational Leader *	39	40	35	40	5
Managerial Leader *	44	40	40	50	5
Spiritual Leader **	23	20	10	33	8
Educational Leader **	37	40	35	40	8
Managerial Leader **	40	40	33	50	8

Note: A average B median C minimum D maximum N total number of participants

* Elimination of the data sets with 0 and 100 percent
** Elimination of 0 percent data and replacement of data sets of 100 percent with 33 percent

time in the discharge of day-to-day responsibilities. Principals on average devoted 23% of

their time as spiritual leaders, 37% as educational leaders, and 40% of their time as

managerial leaders. The most demanding responsibilities listed in decreasing order of

time devoted to each responsibility included: personnel management, instructional

management, and leadership (Table 10).

Participants were asked to comment on why principals devoted the greatest

amount of time to their roles as managerial leaders. Selective replies included:

Managerial roles involve administrative duties of planning and evaluating.

These tasks need to be documented and recorded...tasks that just take time
away from other teaching-related activities. (Participant D)

Principals as managers deal with people. Managing staff and teachers is
the least developed role of principals. (Participant L)

Participants were asked to comment on how principals devoted their time to the

responsibilities of personnel and institutional management. Selective replies included:

Taking time for personal growth and reflection is a luxury only allowed
during holidays and summer break. (Participant D)

There are no short cuts worth taking. It is a time-consuming job, but I am
thankful -- for the support of staff, parents, and volunteers that help.
Principals as managers work on these responsibilities every day,
sometimes to the exclusion of other more important responsibilities. It just
comes with the job. (Participant G)

My days are filled with paperwork, decisions, projects, fund-raising,
promotions, meetings, teaching, consulting....I wouldn't have it any other
way. (Participant L)

Principals are not born managers. (Participant L)

Difficulty. Principals perceived their role as educational leaders to be the most

difficult, followed by principals as managerial leaders, and the least difficult role as

Table 10

Niagara Christian School Principals' Responsibilities - Time Devoted

A	B	C	D
1	2	m	Personnel Management
2	4	m	Institutional Management
3	6	e	Leadership
4	8	s	Building Christian Community
4	8	s	Moral and Ethical Development
5	11	e	Curriculum and Instruction
6	13	s	Faith Development
7	14	m	Finance and Development
8	15	s	History and Philosophy

Note: A   Ranking of responsibilities - most to least frequent   N = 10
          B   Score
          C   Role   s spiritual role   e educational role   m managerial role
          D   Area of Responsibility

spiritual leaders (Table 11). Sixty-six percent of principals on average viewed their role

as educational leaders to be the most difficult job component, 77% ranked management

duties as second in difficulty, and 88% percent of principals believed the spiritual

requirements of their job the least difficult (Table 12).

Responsibilities listed in decreasing order of difficulty included: institutional

management, curriculum and instruction, personnel management, leadership, and finance

and development (Table 13). Principals clearly found their roles as educational and

managerial leaders to be the most difficult.

Participants were asked to comment on why principals identified their role as

educational leaders to be the most difficult. Selective replies included:

> ...firmly rooted in my faith. Do not always know how to be the best
> educational leader. (Participant C)

> Teachers as prospective principals observe principals performing as
> managerial leaders. Principals work closely with teachers dealing with
> spiritual matters. However, being an educational leader is difficult because
> it has to be learned from scratch as it is usually hidden from prospective
> principals. There are few handbooks on how to be a good educational
> leader. Principals enter this position with a lack of experience, mentors,
> and talents. (Participant D)

> Becoming a good principal takes time...it is a slow process. New
> principals find this role the most difficult and slowest to master.
> (Participant G)

> Strong principals place high value of building relationships. In managing
> staff and students one discovers the stresses that come with the job.
> (Participant H)

> The purpose of the school is to provide the best education. How to
> accomplish this in a smaller private school is a demanding responsibility.
> Working with the right curriculum, conducting assessment, monitoring

Table 11

Niagara Christian School Principals' Difficulty of Roles - Role Sequences

Role Sequence	Frequency
B C A	6
C B A	2
A C B	1

Note: A spiritual
B educational Leader   Role sequence = greatest to least difficulty
C managerial Leader

Table 12

Niagara Christian School Principals' Difficulty of Roles - Rankings

Roles	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	N
Spiritual Leader	1	0	8	9
Educational Leader	6	2	1	9
Managerial Leader	2	7	0	9

Note: N total number of participants

Table 13

Niagara Christian School Principals' Responsibilities - Difficulty

A	B	C	D
1	2	m	Institutional Management
2	5	e	Curriculum and Instruction
2	5	m	Personnel Management
2	5	e	Leadership
3	7	m	Finance and Development
4	9	s	Faith Development
5	11	s	History and Philosophy
6	12	s	Building Christian Community
7	13	s	Moral and Ethical Development

Note:
A   Ranking of responsibilities - most to least frequent   N = 9
B   Score
C   Role   s spiritual role   e educational role   m managerial role
D   Area of Responsibility

student performance, retaining records, dealing with special needs students ...it is difficult to address these issues in our school with limited staff and expertise. Spiritual and managerial roles are straightforward...educational roles are student focused, and in all circumstances directly involve students, teachers, and parents....Principals are trained in the fundamentals of spiritual issues, work with staff on managerial issues, but require special skills to resolve conflict when dealing with educational issues. Not all principals are trained for this responsibility. Not all principals are gifted... (Participant L)

Participants were asked to comment on the extent to which the responsibilities of curriculum and instruction, and leadership were difficult for principals as educational leaders. Selective replies included:

...curriculum and instruction take a huge commitment of time at the beginning of the year. As an educator and instructor...choosing the appropriate curriculum, developing lesson plans, finding resources, improving pedagogy, working as a team. (Participant D)

Principals are in charge as chief executive officers making decisions about their roles as managers and are also in a position to change these problems or bring someone on board who can help with difficult areas... responsible to a school board who are to meet these needs...not infallible and should own up to their shortcomings and do something about their weaknesses. Good principals know how and when to ask for help with difficult and time-consuming tasks. (Participant G)

As a former teacher I am called to teach on a regular basis. Taking my principal's hat off and replacing it with my teacher's hat is not easy to do ...other priorities are always calling. (Participant L)

Principals that are positioned as administrators and managers fall short when providing leadership in education-related areas. Building teachers, evaluating, training, supporting, and leading are too often activities that are left to one side when building Christian schools. Support from other schools, principals, and associations is not adequate, governing associations *[sic]*...offer some assistance, but from a distance and only in general terms...principals are often ill-equipped to be effective educational leaders. (Participant L)

Niagara Christian School Principals' Role Complexity

The second subpurpose of the study was to identify the occurrence of role

complexity as perceived by principals themselves. Principals claimed that their roles as

spiritual leaders took the least amount of time and were the least difficult. Principals

claimed that managerial requirements were the most time-consuming. Principals argued

that the educational component of their job was the most difficult. Clearly, religious

school principals did not describe each of their three primary roles as equally important,

satisfying, or difficult and did not allocate the same proportionate amount of time to each

area. Role complexity or ambiguity occurs when actual and ideal roles do not coincide.

Principals were not directly asked to comment on role ambiguity and how it may affect

their roles as school leaders. Participants were asked whether Christian school principals'

roles changed over time. Selective replies included:

> Yes, but it is impossible to know which ones change, how they change,
> why they change, and how they affect schools. (Participant D)

> Christian schools...change just as the world around us changes. Principals
> were often thought of as head teachers, administrators, and school
> managers. Current principals spend too much time dealing with
> paperwork, student-based problems, finances, curriculum, planning...keeps
> us away from our primary responsibilities to support, care, and shepherd
> staff teachers and students. With increasing demands and the length of the
> school day getting longer...principals are increasingly spending too much
> time on areas not essential to the spiritual growth of students and staff.
> (Participant G)

> ...the roles of principals fundamentally do not change just as the
> expectations of parents do not change either...having said that, [sighing]
> Christian schools are expected to deliver quality Christian education at a
> reasonable price which isn't always easy. The challenge is to meet and
> exceed these expectations. Roles may not change, but the circumstances
> do... (Participant L)

Participants were asked how the roles of part-time and teaching principals might be different from full-time and non-teaching principals. Selective replies included:

> There is no such thing as a part-time principal. All school principals put in more hours than necessary. Being a principal is a full-time job...[pauses] what I meant to say is that Christian principals are dedicated to their jobs, work extremely hard, and sacrifice just as Jesus did. (Participant D)

> Principals are consumed by their roles...budgetary pressures in addition to living up to the expectations of the school board, church, parents, and students are all-consuming. Part-time principals take on these responsibilities knowingly...and for the most part thrive. The best principals are effective administrators, know when to delegate, use their time wisely, learn from others, take time to rejuvenate...growing closer to God by reading His Word, falling on their knees in prayer, seeking direction and wisdom on a daily basis. God is able. (Participant G)

> Part-time principals and those principals that teach do so reluctantly. It is usually a budgetary or a numbers game that requires principals serving in newer and smaller schools to teach. In fact, most principals teach one or two subjects, oversee recess, supervise lunches, drive the school's bus, coach a team, coordinate chapel...Research has indicated that principals in Christian schools are in trouble.
> (Participant L)

Christian school principals' careers were observed by the principal observer to be either short-lived with a high burnout and replacement rate, or to extend into lengthy service at one school. Participants were asked to comment on the career paths of Christian school principals. Selective replies included:

> There is a real shortage of principals. The demands placed on principals is hurting those best qualified and suited to be principals. Burnout, finances, ...commitment of time to their school, board, and church adds pressure to an already difficult position. ...principals from new or less established schools rotate principals with regularity. Principals from larger and established schools can spend more time on educational issues without having to put out fires on a regular basis. (Participant D)

> Young schools with young principals run out of time, patience, supporters,

students, and salaries when they stall and don't grow...these principals find that lower salaries and the large commitment of time are too much...they just can't make ends meet and look for other opportunities or career changes. (Participant G)

A larger school has a larger budget, with more staff, more resources, and more parents to help with all extracurricular activities. More of everything -- to succeed where smaller schools and principals fail. (Participant L)

Not all principals have the proper training and skills. The success of a Christian school is directly related to the strength of the parents and the sponsoring church body. ...not all principals have the abilities and necessary skills to start or lead a school through challenges that are always present and never-ending...faith and vision are important to the success and growth of a Christian school. The principal plays a large part in this process. (Participant L)

The ranking of most frequently expressed spiritual, managerial, and educational behaviours did not exhibit any trends or patterns. Principals were not asked to validate or critique individual behaviours although most principals contributed data for all 12 spiritual, 16 educational, and 17 managerial behaviours. Few patterns emerged when comparing principals' rankings of cross-listed responsibilities. However, the highest ranked responsibilities were leadership, personnel management, and institutional management. The responsibilities of faith development, building Christian community, and curriculum and instruction were the second most highly ranked cross-posted responsibilities. How the frequency of principals' behaviours were connected to the importance, difficulty, satisfaction, and time devoted to role-related responsibilities or competencies and three primary roles was not investigated. The suitability, number, definition, complexity, and relevance of principals' behaviours were not examined.

Participants were asked how different behaviours were revealed by Christian

school principals. Selective replies included:

> Behaviours are tasks, functions...that are linked to job descriptions and expectations of the entire school community. (Participant D)

> All behaviours are important...some are more important at different times of the school year. Others are performed consistently from day to day. It is hard to differentiate between behaviours across different responsibilities and roles. As a...principal there isn't enough time in the day to think about how behaviours are linked to responsibilities. (Participant G)

> Staff, parents, and students watch principals very closely. All behaviours are important and evaluated on a consistent basis. What a principal does, how they dress, what they say, etc. are messages given to others about the character and values they think are important....Principals are essential role models. Their behaviours dictate the Christian character of their schools. (Participant L)

Niagara Christian Schools' Profile

A goal of this study was to ascertain the background characteristics of Niagara's private Christian elementary schools. The majority of Christian schools that participated in this study were established and mature schools. Niagara Christian schools averaged 22 years with a range of 8 to 70 years (Table 14). Student enrolment averaged 153 students, with only 58 students at one school and 500 students at the largest school. School staffing levels averaged 10 full-time equivalent teachers per school ranging from a minimum of 5 teachers at one school and 30 teachers at the largest school. Niagara Christian schools are generally governed by schoolboard-appointed principals. All surveyed principals had current or drafted job descriptions.

Participants were asked to comment on how the size or age of a particular Christian school might influence a principal's role(s), responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours. A selective reply included:

Table 14

Niagara Christian Schools' Demographics

	A	B	C	D	N
Age (years)	21.6	17	8	70	10
Students (number)	153	85	58	500	10
Teachers (number of full-time equivalent)	10	7.75	5	30	10

Note: A = average B = median C = Minimum D = Maximum N = total number of participants

The size of a school really has no bearing on the type of principal for each school. Smaller schools have fewer staff and teachers to complete what needs to be done. Larger schools allow the principal to take on more important roles at any given time of the day. Large or small...principals normally have the same roles. (Participant L)

Participants were asked to describe their school's administrative and governing structure. Selective replies included:

The school is a *parental* school. A Board of Directors is elected from the membership. The Board is elected from the membership. The Board establishes standing committees to oversee all facets of school operation: education, facilities, transportation, etc. (Participant A)

Local school board governance. Has five standing committees that report per month. Education, Finance, PR, Transport, Building Committee. Meeting with membership two times per year. (Participant B)

The school is a parent-run school which elects a 7-member Board of directors. The Board of directors hires the principal who is responsible for staff. (Participant C)

...is run by a school board. My responsibilities are to work with the board, staff, parents, and students to glorify God in all areas including school finances, instruction, and administration. Prayer, faith, and Christian love govern this school. Without Jesus this school would not exist. (Participant E)

Policies are Board approved, developed by parents serving on committees. (Participant H)

Participants were asked to reflect on what made their school a special place. Selective replies included:

1. Our school is not a *mission school*. Rather, members must be Christian to send their children. 2. Our school recognizes the Sovereignty of God. We are His creatures. We were created in His image. We are mandated to honour God by honouring/respecting Gods creatures and God's creation. 3. Our school promotes a Christian worldview. Christianity is not merely church attendance. It is a way of life much like materialism or humanism is the way of life for most North Americans. Thus, promoting this

Christian worldview, all subjects are taught from a Christian perspective. 4. Our school promotes Christian discernment. As we are bombarded by every sort of message every day, children are taught to weigh and evaluate what they encounter from the perspective they have been taught. 5. Our school promotes excellence in academics as well as in building relationships. 6. Our school recognizes that we are all sinful creatures and all must strive to live for Jesus every day. This is an ongoing process. (Participant A)

Our teachers make our school a very special place. They are personally interested in the children and their families. They work well together and support discipline guidelines. They work very hard to give a broad education and provide excellent leadership for programs. They are called to Christian education. (Participant C)

Our students make...a very special place. Students are gifts from God, given to us for nurture and admonition. They come in all sizes and shapes, but they are all special in God's eyes. We have the privilege of partnering with parents to shape students into Christ's image, conforming them not to this world, but to a greater calling in life. Our school is special because we help our staff, teachers, parents, and students to know that God has a purpose and plan for their lives. (Participant F)

School is parent run, high academic standards taught from a Christian perspective, positive school climate, certified Christian teachers... (Participant H)

Strong parental support and communication between home and school. (Participant J)

Miracles happen here. (Participant M)

Christian schools are religious in nature. Were it not for the religious purpose of Christian schools, they would not exist. (Niagara Christian school promotional literature, 2003)

...is dedicated to providing quality education in an atmosphere where the core curriculum meets and attempts to exceed the requirements as set forth by the Ministry of Education and where the learning emergences conform to the principle of God's Word....All subjects are presented to ultimately glorify God. Mathematics is taught to show the precise orderliness of God's world. Science is taught to show the creative handiwork of God. History is presented as HIS-story. Reading is necessary so the child can

read about God, and music was given to us by God to glorify Him. This
approach is enhanced by the addition of Bible courses, Scripture
memorization, and Chapel services, which are an integral part of the
school program. (Niagara Christian school handbook, 2003)

No book can be more important to the Christian school than the Bible. It is
the textbook for all of life and therefore has great importance... (Niagara
Christian school handbook, 2003)

The majority of participating schools were non-denominational. Non-

denominational schools were not directly linked to a specific church and tended to enrol

students from different Christian denominations, as well as students from marginal or

non-Christian backgrounds. Eight Niagara Christian schools were represented by or

affiliated with eight different Christian school organizations. These organizations

represent a cross-section of provincial and international Christian school associations and

organizations. A minority of schools considered themselves to be independent. Table 15

identifies Christian schools' denominational and organizational affiliations mentioned at

least once by all participating schools.

Niagara Christian School Principals' Profile

A goal of this study was to ascertain the background biographical characteristics

of principals serving in Niagara's private Christian elementary schools. Principals that

participated in the survey portion of this study were described almost exclusively as

middle-aged men having served an average of 20 years in Christian education and 10

years as a principal. A minority of principals were employed part-time and assumed

additional teaching responsibilities. Most principals had an Ontario College of Teaching

Certificate and received postsecondary education. Principals were observed to spend most

Table 15

Niagara Christian Schools' Denominational and Organization Affiliations

	Christian Non-denominational	Christian Canadian Reformed	Christian Other	N
	6	2	2	10

Note: N = total number of participants

School organization Affiliation (mentioned at least once)

      Association of Christian Schools International
      Ontario Association of Christian Schools
      Christian Schools International
      League of Canadian Reformed Schools
      Ontario Federation of Independent Schools
      Canadian Council of Christian Charities
      Reformed Christian Service
      Independent
      Other

of their working lives in Christian education and a significant number of years exclusively at their current school.

Principals' average age was 47 years with a range of 41 to 54 years (Table 16). Principals on average started their career in Christian education at the age of 26 years and became principals at age 37 years. Principals on average had completed 20 years of Christian education service and almost 10 years as principals with a range of 2 to 27 years (Table 17). Principals had been educators at their current schools on average 9 years, and principals for 6 years. Principals on average had served as principals 41% of their professional careers in Christian education. A majority of principals were career appointments connected to one school organization.

Principals participating in this study were generally well educated, with 70% of participants having a bachelors degree, 30% a masters degree, 50% a Bachelor of Education degree, and 90% an Ontario College of Teaching certificate (Table 18). Thirty percent of principals were employed in a part-time capacity, working 50 to 60% of a full-time principal's workload (Table 19). Forty percent of principals taught in addition to their responsibilities as school principals. Teaching responsibilities varied between 4 to 60% of their full-time workload as principals.

Principals were judged to be well qualified for their positions. Participants were asked to comment. Selective replies included:

> Christian school principals are a very special breed. They stick closer to Jesus than anyone else. Without this spiritual power they couldn't realize a fraction of what they accomplish. (Participant D)

Table 16

Niagara Christian School Principals' Age

	A	B	C	D	N
Current Age (years)	47	47	41	54	9
Age started in Christian Education	26	24	18	39	9
Age started as a Principal	37	40	20	44	9

Note: A average B median C minimum D maximum N total number of participants

Table 17

Niagara Christian School Principals' Service

	A	B	C	D	N
Christian Education (total number of years)	20	20	7	30	10
Principalship	9.6	9	2	27	10
Current School	9	5	2	28	10
Principal at Current School	6	4	2	18	10
Principals (percentage of life)	44	45	15	64	9
Christian Educators (percentage of life)	74	80	19	100	10
Christian Education as Principals (percentage of career)	41	43	9	90	10

Note: A average B median C minimum D maximum N total number of participants

Table 18

Niagara Christian School Principals' Terminal Degree

Degree	Number
Bachelor of Arts	2
Bachelor of Education	5
Bachelors	7
Masters	3
Ontario College of Teaching Certificate	9
Total number of participants	10

Note: N total number of participants

Table 19

Niagara Christian School Principals' Teaching and Employment Status

Teaching Status		Employment Status		
Does not Teach	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	N
6	4	7	3	10

Note: N total number of participants

    4 full time principals do not teach as part of their formal duties
    2 part time principals do not teach as part of their formal duties
    3 full time principals teach part time
    1 part time principal teaches part time

    2 part time principals work 50 percent
    1 part time principal works 60 percent

    1 part time principal teaches 4 percent
    1 part time principal teaches 12.5 percent
    1 full time principal teaches 60 percent
    1 full time principal teaches 33 percent

Many principals attend regional and annual conferences...network with colleagues at other Christian schools...participate in professional development programs. I cannot comment on the experiences of Canadian principals, but a great proportion of principals from larger Christian schools are truly renaissance people. They have a distinct love for education and children. A large problem of Christian schools is attracting new principals with the same love and drive...especially during difficult times. (Participant G)

Hard to know. There is little to no research on principals to know either way. (Participant L)

Participants were asked whether principals' age or length of service influenced their perception of role(s), responsibilities, and subsequent behaviours. Selective replies included:

Experienced principals are better principals. (Participant D)

Roles of principals change over time. The best principals anticipate change rather than reacting to it. Older principals become better at anticipating change and are better suited to adjust their roles to accommodate change from many different directions. (Participant D)

...principals are for the most part former teachers asked to step in a vacant position. These principals are first time principals...rookies with little training and no experience other than having watched former principals... (Participant G)

Wisdom is a strange thing, it is not cumulative...effective principals learn from their mistakes and become better principals. Roles remain the same, they don't change...how we approach our jobs as principals does change. (Participant L)

Participants were asked to provide a brief commentary on how why they entered Christian education and what attracted them to the principalship. Selective replies included:

I became a teacher because I love children, I love to learn, and I love to share this love for learning. I teach in a Christian school because I need to

inculcate the Christian morals and values to the next generation. I became a principal first because I felt called to do so, second because I feel I have been a good leader in my former school, and third, I want to do my part to answer the call as there is a principal shortage. (Participant B)

In Bible school I taught a vision of ministry in Christian Education...I was asked to be the principal of our school -- something I never planned to do. (Participant C)

I was a career teacher and never thought to be a principal. After...years of service I felt that I had the background to be a good principal. God continues to have a plan for my life that involves opportunities far bigger than I could have imagined. (Participant E)

My goal was to teach in a Christian school. Interest and school needs prompted my desire to serve as a principal. (Participant F)

Very much believed God was opening a door to Christian Education. After years of teaching -- opening available as Principal -- strongly encouraged to apply by peers. (Participant H)

I entered Christian education and watched with interest successful principals for years as a junior teacher. I took qualifying courses and applied for this position when the former principal retired. (Participant I)

I was brought in by the school...and given direction by the school's board and peers to be the principal. (Participant M)

Interpretation

Survey and interview data were analyzed for general themes and patterns using standard qualitative methods. The coding of survey and interview data was conducted during several different sessions over an extended period of time. Labels were constructed that coincided with participants' perceptions of religious school principals as important role models and school leaders. Labels identified during the preliminary phase of coding included: ministry, excellence, leadership, sacrifice, integrity, God-honouring/scripturally-based, entrepreneurial, and overseers. Three additional constructs

or emergent themes from the data were identified and labelled by the primary investigator describing religious school principals in metaphorical terms.

Metaphors are powerful literary devices that describe principals using lasting images and pictures.

> If I asked how you picture your life, what image would come to your mind? That image is your life *metaphor*. It's the view of life that you hold, consciously or unconsciously, in your mind. It's your description of how life works and what you expect from it ...It determines your expectations, your values, your relationships, your goals, and your priorities. (Warren, 2002, pp. 41-42)

Metaphors developed from labelled qualitative data included principals as shepherds, servant leaders, and visionaries.

Principals as Shepherds

Religious school principals' primary role as school leaders was described using the metaphor of principals as shepherds. Both religious school principals and shepherds assume total control and responsibility for their work environments, stand alone in their jobs, yet assume pivotal and essential positions. Shepherds are called to well-defined positions and are instructed to care, protect, provide direction, and oversee their sheep. This is equally true of religious school principals charged with the spiritual tasks of instructing and nurturing students. Principals were found to be exemplary faith leaders who served their schools as people of integrity, status, power, and maturity. Religious school principals as shepherds portray the important role of spiritual leader developing Christian community and strengthening of faith within their school communities. Participants identified the most frequently expressed spiritual behaviours as: Integrates

gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies, and life of the school; Facilitates the moral developments and maturity of children, youth, and adults; Ensures quality Christian religious instruction of students; Promotes Christian community; Provides opportunities for the school community to celebrate faith.

Christian school principals portrayed as shepherds reflect Christian qualities and characteristics. Christians through Scripture are commanded to reflect God's characteristics, although not all Christian school principals may have outstanding shepherding instincts. Jesus modelled the roles and responsibilities of a good shepherd (John 10: 11, 14). Selective data on this emergent theme included:

> My role as a principal is to oversee all school activities using a Christian perspective. (Participant F)

> Principals see themselves acting as Jesus did-exploring ways to lead and direct, asking themselves, What Would Jesus Do... (Participant D)

> Principals are in charge as chief executive officers... (Participant G)

> ...principals as spiritual leaders actively participate in school ministries as role models, leading rather than following. (Participant L)

Principals as Servant Leaders

Religious school principals' primary role as school leaders was described by the metaphor of principals as servant leaders. Servants are directed to give of themselves for the good of others. Servants are directed, follow instructions, and aim to please in the performance of their jobs. Principals as reluctant managers and administrators sacrifice themselves for the good of their students. Bogue (1985) cites the characteristics of servant leaders to include: an ability to be compassionate, a willingness to absorb the hostility of

others, to have one's daily routine interrupted and a sensitive use of authority. Servant leaders also align personal goals with organizational goals. Christian school principals intentionally position themselves to be used by God. Similar to servants, Christian school principals do not question their mandate, obey their Master, seek to please, sacrifice, and give unselfishly.

Religious school principals as servant leaders portray the important role of managerial leader, directing personnel and institutional management responsibilities within their school organizations. Participants identified the most frequently expressed managerial behaviours as: Understands Christian school governance structures and works effectively with school boards; Evaluates staff; Manages conflicts effectively; Knows and applies the skills of organizational management, delegation of responsibilities, and communication skills; Demonstrates skills in planning and managing the school's financial resources toward developing and monitoring an annual budget; Seeks resources and support beyond the school and church; Uses group processes skills effectively with various school committees; Understands the basic strategies of long-range planning and applies them in developing plans for the school.

Christian school principals as servant leaders reflect Christian qualities and characteristics. Jesus of Nazareth in Scripture is portrayed as a reluctant leader. While commanding his followers to seek God with all their hearts, souls and minds, Jesus is humbled by positioning himself as a servant (Matthew 20:26-28). Selective data on this emergent theme included:

Jesus in a leadership role was only effective when he washed the feet of

others...principals as servant leaders are to follow His example. (Participant D)

...principals are not motivated by low salaries, long hours, minimal benefits, lack of facilities, inadequate working conditions. They are motivated by Christian service to their schools and students. (Participant L)

...to be in the centre of God's will is to be a servant looking to God for constant direction...*wisdom and*...strength. (Participant L)

Principals as Visionaries

Religious school principals' primary role as school leaders was described by the metaphor of principals as visionaries. Visionaries possess the gifts of leadership and prophesy. Principals, similar to visionaries, are directed to articulate, communicate, and realize a vision for the entire school community. Principals require the ability to see into the future and grasp a vision of what is possible for the school organization. Religious school principals constantly work on the edge of what is real and what is possible. Principals as visionaries lead their schools with a proactive and an entrepreneurial spirit. Religious school principals are constantly building, admonishing, adjusting, and elevating their vision. Religious school principals as visionaries portray the important role of educational leader providing leadership responsibilities within their school organizations. Participants identified the most frequently expressed educational behaviours as: Applies a Christian educational vision to the daily activities of the school; Attends to personal growth and professional development; Interprets and uses research to guide action plans; Identifies and effects needed change.

The metaphor of Christian school principals portrayed as visionaries reflects

Christian qualities and characteristics (Proverbs 29:18). Christian education is often

described as educating for eternity. Seeds planted in the fertile ground of Christian school

environments have the potential to produce fruit of immense proportions with lasting

impact. Selective data on this theme included:

> ...principals should have a clear vision on how to accomplish their goals.
> (Participant G)

> Christian school principals are given a vision from God to lead as Jesus
> led, teach as Jesus taught, serve as Jesus served, disciple as Jesus discipled
> ...setting a high standard. (Participant I)

> ...faith and vision are important to the success and growth of a Christian
> school. The principal plays a large part in this process. (Participant L)

Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model

The third subpurpose was to depict a social systems model that described religious

school principals' different role elements. Principals' roles are modelled on a Religious

School Principals' Social Systems Model (Figure 2). This model depicts how principals'

roles, responsibilities, and behaviours are interconnected. Principals' roles are influenced

by a vast array of role elements within a wider organizational culture and school

community. Religious school principals' roles are dynamic, change over time, and are

shaped by the religious and secular culture in which they function. Although principals'

roles are renegotiated by all members of the school organization, this study investigated

only one small segment of this descriptive model.

Summary

In summary, religious school principals described their most important role as

spiritual school leaders. Spirituality was the most important element and competency of
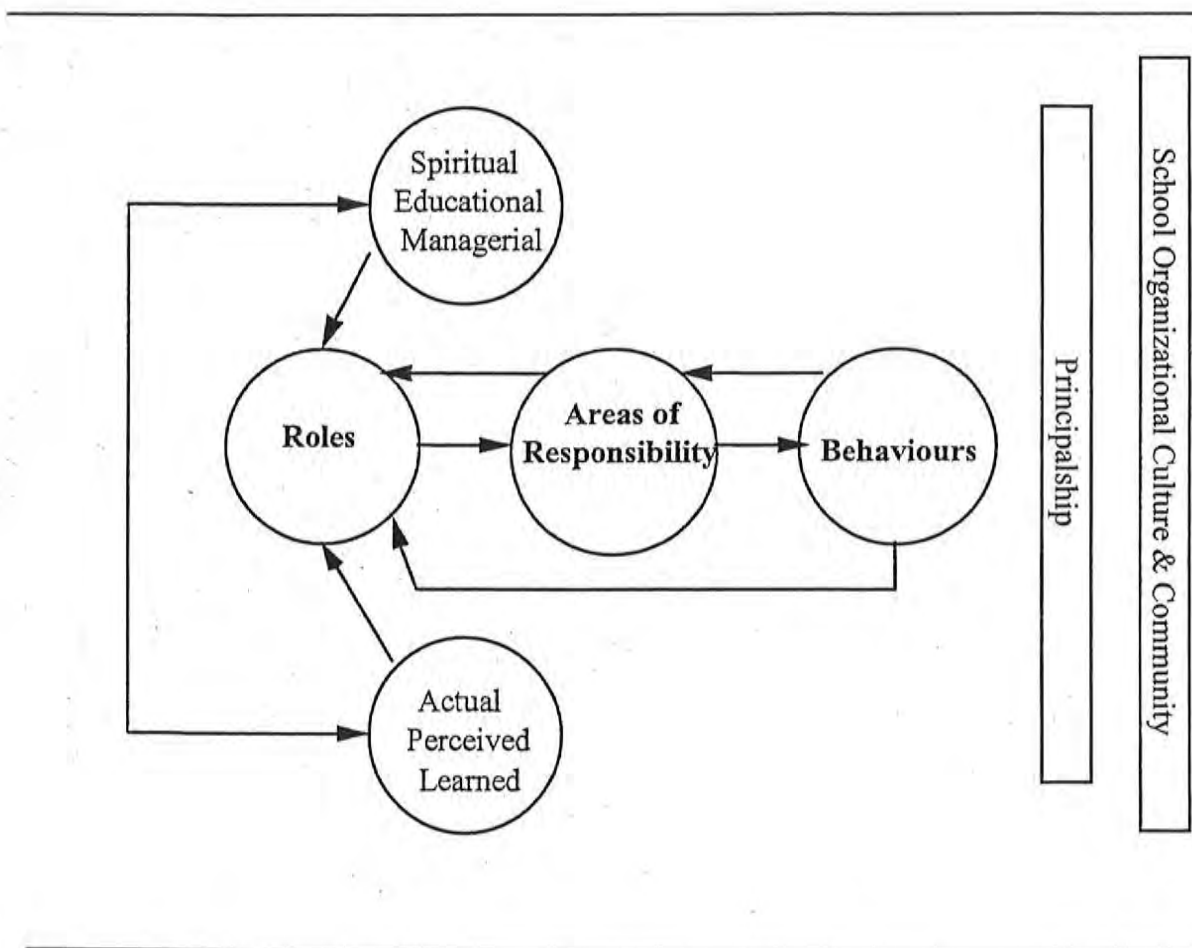
Figure 2. Religious school principals' social systems model.

principals' jobs. Principals as spiritual leaders indicated that this role was the most satisfying and important manifested through the responsibilities of building Christian community and faith development. Principals as educational leaders indicated that this role was the most difficult when tied to the responsibilities of leadership, curriculum, and instruction. Principals as managerial leaders stated that this role was the most time-consuming within the parameters of personnel and institutional management. Religious school principals on average devoted 23% of their time as spiritual leaders, 37% as educational leaders, and 40% of their time as managerial leaders.

Principals, although not defining or describing ideal role elements, recognized that role complexity and ambiguity were present in their roles as school leaders. The extent, nature, and consequences of role ambiguity and strain were not explored. Principals' roles were modelled on a Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model.

Niagara Christian school principals saw themselves as school leaders well-prepared for their tasks academically and professionally. Principals serving in Niagara Christian schools were predominantly male, middle-aged, full-time, and assumed very little to no teaching responsibilities. Niagara Christian schools were predominantly small in size, established, governed by school boards, and affiliated with regional, national, and international Christian school associations. Christian schools were described as special places dedicated to Christian education. Principals' roles were ultimately described using the Christian metaphorical images of principals as shepherds, visionaries, and servant leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

It has been said that there is no hotter seat in all of education than the one in the principal's office, and few principals working today would disagree with that observation. School leaders catch it from all sides, contending with the sometimes competing interests of teachers, parents, central-office administrators, school boards, and community members....The most effective principals are able to rise above the battle with a strong vision and mission. When the job gets tough, re-visit your vision and remind yourself of the core reasons you are in the position....And yet, despite all of the pressures, we know many principals find their jobs extremely rewarding. They are motivated less by financial rewards than by the desire to make a lasting difference in the lives of children -- and in the larger community. (Ferrandino, 2003, p. 70)

Summary

The main purpose of this study was to describe how principals serving in religious private schools defined their actual roles and responsibilities as spiritual, educational, and managerial school leaders. The questionnaire used in this study asked principals from a cross-section of different Christian schools to reflect on the importance of their roles, responsibilities, and the frequency of related behaviours. Experts familiar with educational research and the Christian school movement were asked to validate and comment on survey results by responding to a series of semistructured questions. All information generated from the survey and transcripts of interviews was analyzed for emergent themes.

A mixed-method descriptive research design used a survey instrument and in-depth interviews to collect data on religious school principals' primary roles and responsibilities. Ten Niagara Christian school principals were surveyed to collect demographic data to develop profiles of participants and their schools. The principals were asked to provide information on self-perceptions of their actual roles as spiritual,

educational, and managerial school leaders as defined in the literature by Ciriello (1998). The survey instrument collected information on what principals perceived as important, satisfying, difficult, and time-consuming. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures to calculate scores and determine the rankings of roles, responsibilities, and the frequencies of role-related behaviours. Three expert Christian educators were asked to review and interpret survey findings using a series of semistructured questions. Qualitative data from all sources were analyzed using qualitative techniques to identify emergent themes and general patterns as explained by Merriam (1998), and Bogdan and Biklen (1998).

Broadly, the most important result of this study was the picture gained from the real world of religious school principals as it pertains to their unique roles. Principals participating in the survey and Christian school experts concurred that private school principals perform interstitial roles as spiritual, managerial, and educational school leaders. Foskett and Wolcott (1966) defined the term interstitial role as the independent expression of individual role elements that "...tends to be associated in part with each of the adjoining roles but not completely identified with either" (p. 35). Religious school principals' responsibilities exist and are expressed by all three primary roles. Participants clearly described their role as spiritual school leaders to be the most important.

Subpurposes of this study were to identify what principals in religious schools identified as satisfying, time-consuming, and difficult as important role models, explore the occurrence of role complexity as perceived by principals themselves, and to depict a model that described religious school principals' different role elements. Principals

perceived their roles as spiritual leaders to be the most important and satisfying. Principals' roles and responsibilities as educational leaders were viewed as the most difficult. Principals viewed their roles and related responsibilities as managerial leaders as the most time-consuming. Religious school principals on average devoted 23% of their time as spiritual leaders, 37% as educational leaders and 40% of their time as managerial leaders.

Varying degrees of role complexity defined as role incongruence were noted in all job components, although principals held that their roles were generally balanced, satisfying, and rewarding. The extent, nature, and consequences of role complexity, ambiguity, and incongruence were not explored. Principals were ultimately described using the metaphorical images of principals as shepherds, servant leaders, and visionaries. Principals ministering in Christian elementary schools were important role models and projected images as important school and community leaders.

Profiles were developed to describe Niagara Christian school principals and their schools. In addition, a Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model (Figure 2) was presented that depicted how principals' different role elements are interconnected. The model illustrates how principals' roles are expressed by a series of interconnected responsibilities and related behaviours. The model also illustrates how principals' roles are open to interpretation and feedback from members of the school organization and surrounding community.

Problems

This study was hampered by the lack of a well-defined body of review literature

that explored the social roles of religious school principals within their school organizations. Research cited in this study investigating religious school principals was characterized as descriptive, superficial, lacking peer review, and devoid of contrary viewpoints. A well-developed body of literature researching religious school principals' actual, ideal, and primary roles might have aided the interpretation of data, comparison of role perspectives, and the discussion of role complexity, congruence, and strain.

The length and comprehensiveness of the survey instrument may have contributed to survey fatigue. Selective principals who completed the survey skipped questions, failed to follow instructions, and provided a minimal amount of information. The large number and complex nature of questions and the comprehensiveness of the survey instrument may have presented a barrier to reluctant principals to fully complete the entire questionnaire. A shorter, more focused questionnaire investigating only certain aspects of principals' role behaviours might have produced more qualitative data and discussion by all participants.

The study's original three-phase mixed-method research design included a focus group meeting of current and former religious school principals. The focus group was to include participants that represented a diverse range of Christian school principals based on their length of service, gender, institutional affiliation, and educational background. The meeting was designed to explore ideas generated from the survey in greater detail and depth. The use of a focus group meeting was to provide a means for assessing intentionally created conversations about survey data and additional research topics or problems (Krueger, 1994). The meeting was to be an excellent means to facilitate and

stimulate small group discussions in which group members would react to comments made by colleagues, creating a synergistic group. An in-depth conversation among experts was to be an innovative strategy for gathering sometimes difficult-to-obtain data. However, the focus group meeting was cancelled due to a lack of interest. The collection of data from religious school principals about their roles may be best accomplished by alternate methodologies sensitive to their reluctant nature to participate in research studies.

Working definitions of key terms were not available to participants. The lack of uniform descriptions and definitions may have contributed to participant error when interpreting role-related terminology and answering specific questions. Focusing the discussion of principals' roles into the prescribed categories of spiritual, education, and managerial leaders (Ciriello, 1998) may have limited the debate and expression of alternate roles expressions and descriptors.

This study encountered problems in the collection and interpretation of data. The small purposive sample of Niagara Christian school principals may have unknowingly contributed to a less developed description of religious school principals and their primary roles. It is unknown whether the inclusion of data from principals declining to participate in the survey and proposed focus group sessions would have changed the study's main findings.

There may be a tendency to over-generalize findings about Christian and religious school principals from a small purposive sample of 15 principals. The study did not reveal the extent to which there was an agreement among participants in regard to the

primary roles, responsibilities, and behaviours of religious school principals. Although

the study collected important data, there was a general reluctance by most participants to

share their experiences and thoughts reflecting on religious school principals' role-related

competencies and behaviours. The measure of agreement on principals' role-related

elements was based on calculated rankings, scores, and frequencies. The degree of

agreement of role-related behaviours may be open to interpretation.

The credibility and validity of the study's results may have been compromised by

observer bias. I, as principal investigator may have unknowingly introduced bias into the

interpretation of qualitative data. The use of a multi-phased or mixed-method qualitative

research design may have assisted to limit the extent of observer bias affecting the

findings, interpretation, and conclusions of this descriptive and exploratory study.

Conclusions

Principals portray a vast and at times an overwhelming array of interconnected

roles, responsibilities, and behaviours. Principals serving in religious schools responding

to these demands require an equally diverse range of competencies and skills. The main

purpose of this study was to describe how principals from religious private schools

defined the importance of their actual roles and responsibilities. Principals serving in

selective Niagara Christian schools were asked to rank the importance of 3 primary roles,

9 responsibilities, and the frequency of 45 role-related behaviours originally developed by

Ciriello (1998) and modified for this study. Additionally, Christian school experts were

interviewed to comment on survey findings.

Christian school principals defined spiritual leadership as their most important

role, expressed by the responsibilities of faith development, building Christian community and 12 role-related behaviours. Principals as spiritual school leaders were described using the metaphorical image of principals as shepherds. Principals as managerial school leaders were described as servant leaders. Principals as educational leaders were described by the metaphorical image of principals as visionaries. These images assist in the description of religious school principals' roles, status, and position with religious school organizations. Christian school experts agreed with Niagara religious school principals' roles as important school leaders.

A subpurpose of this study was to identify what principals in religious schools identified as satisfying, time-consuming, and difficult as important role models. Christian school principals identified their role as managerial leaders as the most time-consuming job requirement expressed by the responsibilities of personnel and institutional management and 17 role-related behaviours. Principals identified their most difficult role as educational leaders expressed by the responsibilities of leadership, curriculum and instruction, and 16 role-related behaviours. Principals were most satisfied by their responsibilities of building Christian community, faith development, personnel management, and institutional management. Niagara school principals on average devoted 23% of their time as spiritual leaders, 37% as educational leaders and 40% of their time as managerial leaders.

Another subpurpose of this study was to explore the occurrence of role complexity as perceived by principals themselves. Christian school principals as ideal school leaders successfully balance all roles and affiliated responsibilities. This study

defined role complexity as a lack of congruence between principals' ideal and actual role elements. Figure 3 models principals' primary role perspectives as learned, perceived, and actual roles. Figure 4 models religious school principals' primary role expressions as spiritual, educational and managerial leaders (Ciriello, 1998). Role complexity, ambiguity, or incongruence is introduced into the principalship by an imbalance and/or overlapping of different roles elements. Participants observed that Christian school principals' roles were open to interpretation and susceptible to role ambiguity and strain. However, this study did not explore the cause, extent, or consequences of religious school principals' role ambiguity.

Ideally, religious school principals balance their roles while recognizing the importance of spiritual leadership, the difficulty of educational leadership, and the time-consuming constraints of managerial leadership. Rick Warren (2002) reflects on the value of living a balanced life when commenting that "Blessed are the balanced; they shall outlast everyone" (p. 305). Religious school principals attempting to lead successful careers develop strategies that balance primary roles, responsibilities, and behaviours.

An additional subpurpose of this study was to depict a model that described religious school principals' different role elements. Figure 5 models the organizational structure and different stakeholders within religious private schools. This model depicts the role of religious school principals as central and essential to the school organization and wider community. The Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model (Figure 2) depicts how principals' roles, responsibilities, and behaviours are interrelated. Principals' roles are influenced by many different role-related expectations and expressions within
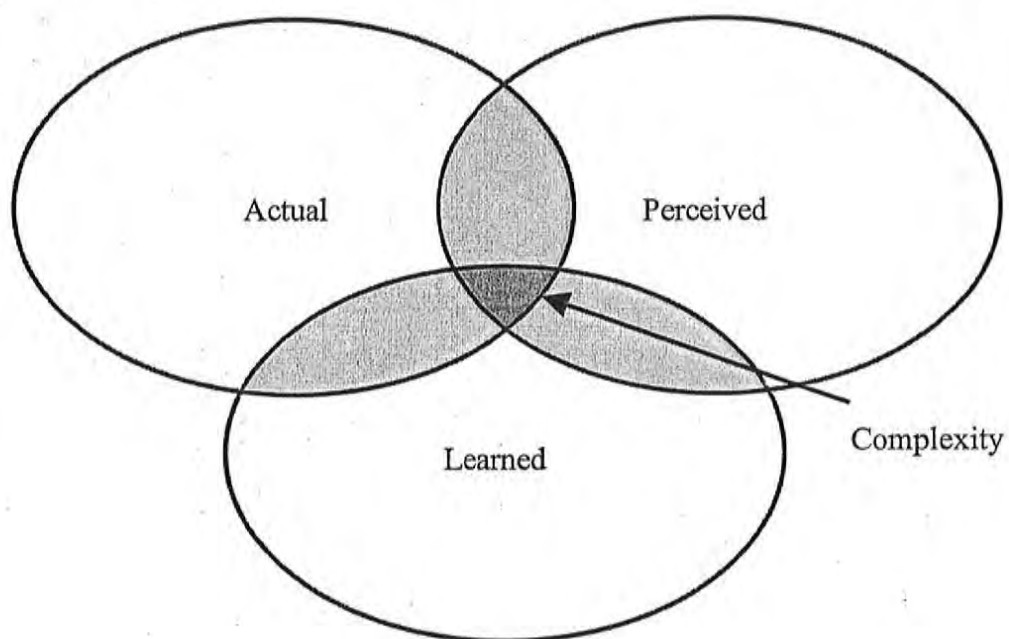
Figure 3. Principals' role perspectives.
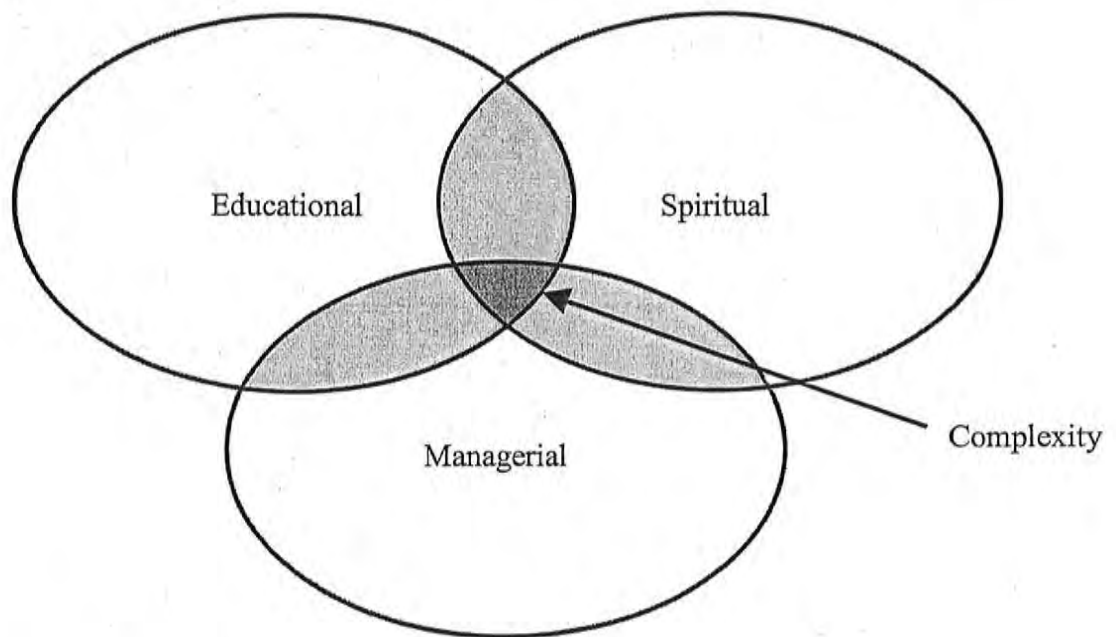
Figure 4. Religious school principals' leadership roles.
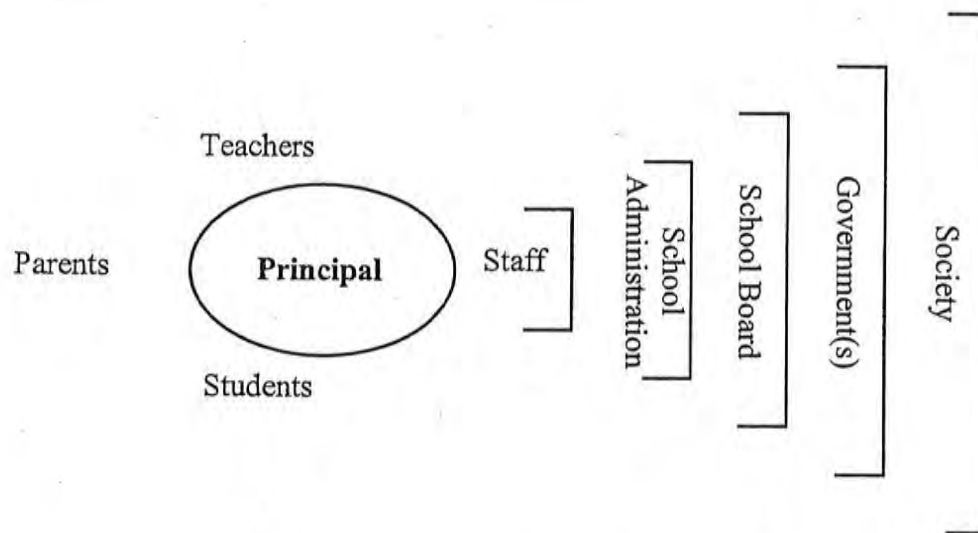
Figure 5. Religious schools' organizational community.

their school organization.

Principals' roles are dynamic, evolve over time, change within the organizational culture in which they function, and are renegotiated by all members of the school organization. Niagara Christian school principals' self-reported roles were defined by a role-set of three primary roles. Principals saw themselves as teachers, educators, role models, but most importantly as spiritual, managerial, and educational school leaders. This study investigated only one small segment of this descriptive model.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

Each day, a principal promises himself or herself to at least get through the mail on his or her desk, and to try to eat lunch, preferably something healthy. Principals are told to balance their professional lives with their personal lives. They are told that those who work 12 to 14 hours a day are ineffective leaders, yet are encouraged to be out of the office more... (Cunningham, 2000, p. 2)

Religious school principals are important school leaders who attempt to balance spiritual, managerial, and educational roles. Principals unable to balance their primary roles are susceptible to role ambiguity, complexity, and strain. Successful religious school principals understand and master important, difficult, and time-consuming role-related competencies, responsibilities, and behaviours. Effective religious school principals also periodically reflect their role performance to identify areas of role ambiguity.

From this research three role-related expressions or expectations emerged; shepherd, visionary, and servant leader. There is evidence that conflicting views of the principals' role are held by principals themselves and presumably by other members of the school community. Principals are identified partly as administrators, partly as

educators, and partly as pastors by all members of the school organization. Principals' interstitial roles were observed to be overlapping. The occurrence of role complexity or ambiguity may ultimately lead to principals' low morale, burnout, and stress. There is an expectation that principals ministering in religious school communities should attend to tasks that are pastoral or shepherding in nature rather than assuming the roles of managers and administrators (Andersen, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1993).

Successful principals require timely evaluation and feedback. Struggling principals unknowingly fail to recognize the problems, consequences, and symptoms of role complexity. This study could be a first step in the development of performance guidelines or an assessment tool used to describe ideal, outstanding, or struggling religious school principals. Members of the wider school community should be better informed about the complexity, importance, and predominant roles of principals. Principals who exhibit role ambivalence or ambiguity may not fully reach their potential.

This study could raise the profile of Christian school principals serving within the Christian school movement and validate this area of research as an interesting and important area for further investigation. Ultimately, all members affiliated with the Christian school movement may reflect on their expectations of principals and adjust their behaviours accordingly. There is a perceived need for Christian school organizations and associations to explore professional development of principals, especially in the area of spiritual formation.

Although the results of this study may not be generalized to all religious school organizations, they can offer insights into the roles of Christian school principals as

effective and transformative school leaders. Religious school principals need to

constantly reflect on their unique identity and to redevelop essential leadership skills. The

Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model could be useful for current and

prospective principals to discuss critical role elements and perceptions of the

principalship. The content of this research reinforced the need for dialogue among those

who aspire to the principalship in religious school organizations.

Future Research

> ...we are still far from a prescriptive model for the principal of tomorrow
> not only because we lack knowledge but also because the complexity of
> the role defies a simple list of imperatives. (Louis & Murphy, 1994, p.
> 279)

The research literature investigating the roles of school principals has a long and

developed history. These studies are of critical importance to all principals. However,

studies investigating religious school principals' roles are limited in number and scope.

As an important and untapped area of educational research, this study presents many

opportunities for future research.

According to the precepts of social role theory "...individuals behave with

reference to expectations" (Gross & Herriott, 1963, p. 92). This study was limited to the

investigation of principals' self-reported or actual roles. Future studies could investigate

religious school principals' ideal, perceived, and learned roles. Future studies could also

investigate how teachers, parents, students, and board members connected to religious

schools perceive principals' roles. Investigating role expectations and role congruence

among members of the religious school community could be of importance to principals

attempting to understand actual versus ideal role expectations. This research could develop guidelines and standards on what religious school principals are to do in their portrayal as effective school leaders. In addition, further studies could investigate how religious school principals' roles, responsibilities, behaviours, and role-related competencies compare with principals serving in public, parochial, private, and Catholic schools.

Future studies of religious school principals' ideal and expected role behaviours may yield performance benchmarks and normative standards. Struggling principals unknowingly fail to recognize the problems, consequences, and symptoms of role failure, role strain, and role complexity. This study could be a first step in the development of performance guidelines or an assessment tool used to describe ideal or outstanding religious school principals.

Principals are under a great deal of stress to be effective, accountable, and successful. Future studies on principals' social roles may uncover why current principals may be experiencing burnout, failure, strain, disappointment, and withdrawal from the profession. Investigating how principals' role complexity or ambiguity is identified, experienced, and played out within different religious school organizations would be a timely study of great importance. Future studies could test the validity of describing principals metaphorically as shepherds, servant leaders, and visionaries and investigate the accuracy of the Religious School Principals' Social Systems Model introduced earlier in this chapter. A study of principals' health and vigour may identify areas for future assessment, improvement, and professional development.

Regional, provincial or state, national, and international Christian school associations could develop workshops, seminars, and professional development resources to assist principals to be better school leaders. Workshops could explore principals' role-related competencies that were identified as demanding, difficult, and time-consuming. Future research into the development of professional development opportunities and workshops could assist principals to be better institutional and personnel managers, faith developers, and Christian community builders.

Reflections

Religious school principals' roles are challenging and demanding. Yet, principals find their position and status within religious school organizations as important, satisfying and rewarding. Principals were observed to use many different competencies and skills in the performance of their jobs. The success of religious schools in part relies on principals understanding and successfully portraying their roles and responsibilities as school leaders.

Religious school principals have a well-developed sense of the importance of their roles. Principals participating in this study were able to rank, describe, and comment on what they perceived as important, difficult, and time-consuming. However, it is unknown whether Christian school principals in the performance of their jobs have the opportunity to reflect on their practice, position, and status as exemplary school leaders. Principals, under the constant pressure to meet ever-changing role expectations, presumably find very little time to reflect on their position within a unique educational organization. This study provided a mechanism for Christian school principals and experts to discuss

theoretical concepts in a meaningful way.

There are many ways to interpret principalship. Kelly (1955) commented that "Each man contemplates in his own personal way the stream of events upon which he finds himself so swiftly borne" (p. 3). Successful religious private school principals anticipate change, role complexity, and ambiguity. In addition, successful religious school principals understand essential role-related competencies and the expectations of others as spiritual, managerial and educational school leaders. Christian school principals were found to interpret their world view primarily as spiritual leaders.

> The Christian school has the mandate to be distinctly different from the secular school across the street. It is not good enough for the Christian school to merely have better discipline, higher grade scores, better qualified teachers, smaller classes, more individualized instruction or even chapel and Bible reading. Biblical principles must be integrated into the fabric of the entire educational process through the influence of teachers deeply committed to the Christian faith. A school with Christian distinctives offers an education that prepares students for life and eternity, students that will honour and glorify God. (Toews, 2002, p. 65)

Through a process of talking with many Christian school parents, educators, administrators, and principals, reading the literature, compiling an exhaustive bibliography, and reflecting upon these experiences, I came to view the study of Christian school principals' roles as an important aspect of education.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Ontario Education Act, Section 265

Principals

(1) It is the duty of a principal of a school, in addition to the principal's duties as a teacher, discipline

    (a) to maintain proper order and discipline in the school; co-operation

    (b) to develop co-operation and co-ordination of effort among the members of the staff of the school; register pupils and record attendance

    (c) to register the pupils and to ensure that the attendance of pupils for every school day is recorded either in the register supplied by the Minister in accordance with the instructions contained therein or in such other manner as is approved by the Minister;

pupil records

    (d) in accordance with this Act, the regulations and the guidelines issued by the Minister, to collect information for inclusion in a record in respect of each pupil enrolled in the school and to establish, maintain, retain, transfer and dispose of the record;

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timetable

    (e) to prepare a timetable, to conduct the school according to such timetable and the school year calendar or calendars applicable thereto, to make the calendar or calendars and the timetable accessible to the pupils, teachers and supervisory officers and to assign classes and subjects to the teachers;

examinations and reports

    (f) to hold, subject to the approval of the appropriate supervisory officer, such examinations as the principal considers necessary for the promotion of pupils or for any other purpose and report as required by the board the progress of the pupil to his or her parent or guardian where the pupil is a minor and otherwise to the pupil;

promote pupils

    (g) subject to revision by the appropriate supervisory officer, to promote such pupils as the principal considers proper and to issue to each such pupil a statement thereof;

textbooks

    (h) to ensure that all textbooks used by pupils are those approved by the board and, in the case of subject areas for which the Minister approves textbooks, those approved by the Minister;

reports

(i) to furnish to the Ministry and to the appropriate supervisory officer any information that it may be in the principal's power to give respecting the condition of the school premises, the discipline of the school, the progress of the pupils and any other matter affecting the interests of the school, and to prepare such reports for the board as are required by the board;

care of pupils and property

(j) to give assiduous attention to the health and comfort of the pupils, to the cleanliness, temperature and ventilation of the school, to the care of all teaching materials and other school property, and to the condition and appearance of the school buildings and grounds;

report to M.O.H.

(k) to report promptly to the board and to the medical officer of health when the principal has reason to suspect the existence of any communicable disease in the school, and of the unsanitary condition of any part of the school building or the school grounds;

persons with communicable diseases

(l) to refuse admission to the school of any person who the principal believes is infected with or exposed to communicable diseases requiring an order under section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act until furnished with a certificate of a medical officer of health or of a legally qualified medical practitioner approved by the medical officer of health that all danger from exposure to contact with such person haspassed;

access to school or class

(m) subject to an appeal to the board, to refuse to admit to the school or classroom a person whose presence in the school or classroom would in the principal's judgment be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupils; and

visitor's book

(n) to maintain a visitor's book in the school when so determined by the board. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 265; 1991, c. 10, s. 6.

Co-instructional activities

(2) In addition, it is the duty of a principal, in accordance with the board plan to provide for co-instructional activities under subsection 170 (1), to develop and implement a school plan providing for co-instructional activities. 2001, c. 14, Sched. A, s. 8.

School council

(3) The principal shall consult the school council at least once in each school year respecting the school plan providing for co-instructional activities. 2001, c. 14, Sched. A, s. 8.

(4) Repealed: 2001, c. 14, Sched. A, s. 8.

Appendix B

Christian School Principal's Role Survey

Educators, principals, administrators, and researchers contacted during the preliminary phase of this study were asked to complete the following sentence " The role of a principal in an Christian elementary school is to..." Selective replies included:

The primary role(s) of a principal in a Christian elementary school setting is to create a spiritual environment among teachers and students that provides for the maximizing of opportunities to meet Jesus as Lord and Saviour and to grow in grace. He or she will seek to adjust that spiritual environment so that growth will be holistic and well-balanced and will aim at character development as well as the development of the Christian mind, Christian social responsibility, vocational expertise, and physical, emotional, and social health. Within that spiritual context the principal should, in the example of Jesus, be a foremost example of service in his or her community. In addition, the principal should actively facilitate opportunities for service in both the school and the larger community so that the entire educational community can develop and utilize their skills for the good of others.

> George R. Knight, Professor of Church History
> Andrews University
> Berrien Springs, MI
> January 13, 2002

I believe the primary role of the principal of an elementary of secondary Christian school is to provide instructional leadership.

> James W. Deuink, Dean
> School of Education
> Bob Jones University
> Greenville, SC
> January 4, 2002

As a spiritual leader and one who loves and understands young children, the primary role of the elementary principal is to possess and demonstrate both managerial and visionary qualities in order to promote a positive, safe and comprehensive learning community, thoroughly enriched by the person of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

> David Hegedus, Elementary School Principal
> Delaware County Christian School
> Newton Square, PA
> January 9, 2002

The primary role(s) of an elementary school principal is to ensure that the educational needs of the school's student and community are met.

Professor Kenneth A. Leithwood
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
February 22, 2002

Model a heart for the Lord Jesus through my attitude, words, and lifestyle;
Evidence a level of spiritual maturity in pressure situations;
Continue to be a learner in spiritual, professional, and other areas;
Have a calling to this position;
Care for people as Jesus does: children, parents and staff;
Be willing to make decisions and use Scripture in appropriate ways in the decision-making process;
Be willing and able to lead others;
Have a heart of humility. (Philippians 2:5-11)

Doug Bray, Lower School Principal
Colorado Springs Christian School
Colorado Springs, CO
January 17, 2002

The primary role(s) of a principal in a Christian elementary school setting is to implement the vision and mission of Christian education as broadly defined by the school board and membership. The implementation of the vision will define how the principals will view and practice the key components of his/her task of ensuring that the basic purpose of education (student learning) is achieved:

- student tracking - to ensure that non fall through the cracks
- staff supervision & development
- curriculum supervision & development
- school atmosphere/climate/ethos.

Keeping the entire education enterprise focused on the vision (the Christian principles that are the "raison d'etre" and are the driving force for development) and ensuring that the key functions actually are in sync with the vision, these are the prime concerns of the principal – sorry, not the chocolate bar sale, nor Valentine's day activities, nor the volleyball team winning or losing, nor the administrivia that are often time demanding, etc.

The role is complex, but being excited about and believing in the vision, and its practical & daily implementation, is part of my joy and service to God as I exercise the role of the principal.

Jim Vreugdenhint, Directory of Elementary Education
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
Ancaster, Ontario
February 8, 2002

with the help of the teachers and the parents the character of our Lord. This can be done by having a vision that has God as the primary goal. Other goals would follow that would include learning, care for others, pride in our school and service to the community at large. Your faculty must understand and buy into all that this means, without a unified team the principal is lost. The teachers and their satisfaction to do a good job must be in place. Good and happy teachers will produce success for your school and successful students. All in a Christian setting.

> Martha Havens, Associate Superintendent
> Southeastern California Conference
> Seventh-Day Adventists
> Riverside, California
> January 11, 2002

The primary role(s) of a principal in a Christian elementary school setting is to be an instructional leader. In a Christian school this statement has a number of implications. First of all it involves being an example both professionally and spiritually for the faculty and staff with whom one works. It means having a Christian world view which promotes "Kingdom Education" and a compassionate heart for the students and their families, desiring that all might come to a heart knowledge of Jesus. It also involves being able to see the "bigger picture" when it comes to working with faculty on curriculum issues, knowing how to provide guidance in making wise choices which will benefit the students. One analogy is to consider a picture frame which defines the boundaries or provides a framework within which the teachers can utilize their talents and creativity as they prepare lessons for their students. The principal can define that framework and communicate it to the faculty. It means being able to assist teachers to grow, both educationally and in their walk with Christ. It means being able to help teachers see that parents are ultimately responsible for their child's education and that the Christian school is there to assist the parents in this task. This involves having a servant's heart and treating families in such a manner which would be pleasing to the Lord. In this process the goals of providing academic excellence and spiritual vitality go hand in hand. Neither goal should be compromised.

As an instructional leader, the elementary school principal needs to be approachable, willing to listen, and have a discerning heart. Often teachers will need encouragement and emotional and spiritual support for dealing with the challenges they face. Instructional leadership means helping the faculty work as a team, each person contributing ideas and their own strengths. It involves the utilization of the Matthew 18 principle of addressing concerns directly to try to resolve issues in a Biblical way. An instructional leader is responsible for evaluating the members of the faculty and helping teachers strengthen their classroom skills. It means being a "cheerleader" and a facilitator for those who are instructing the students, assisting them to do the very best job of educating the students in a manner which is glorifying to the Lord.

> Joyce K. Marcy
> Elementary Principal
> Highview Baptist School
> Louisville, KY
> February 25, 2002

I am admittedly speaking from a Catholic perspective. However, I am sure many of these roles have appropriate application to all Christian elementary school educational leaders.

The three-fold goal of Catholic Education is taken from a document called TO TEACH AS JESUS DID - these are Community, Faith and Service. "Catholic Schools are to be communities of Faith in which the Christian experience of community, worship and social concern are integrated in the total experience of students, their parents, and the faculty." (Sharing the Light of Faith, 1979, no 9) Therefore I think the principal roles of the Catholic School principal are:

1) LEADER OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT - in person and practice- (Models of a lived Faith) for the children, faculty and all constituents of the school community. The principal should be living and witnessing to the faith through active participation in faith based activities, liturgies, prayer services, etc. He/she should monitor the curriculum carefully both in its content and how it is taught in the classroom and lived in the school and in service to the community. Faith development includes moral and ethical development. All the policies of the school should mirror Gospel values and attend to love of neighbor through love of God.

2) BUILDER OF COMMUNITY - within the school and among constituents- One should sense that this is a Catholic (Christian) school as one enters the grounds for one will note a respect for the environment, and property. Once one enters the school one will note a climate of respect for all those who work, study and visit there. The principal needs to foster this type of culture and live it in his/her daily interactions with all. Parents are the primary educators of their children thus the Principal needs to foster tight bonds with parents. The school should be a good citizen in the neighborhood. The Principal needs to encourage these relationships and to instill within the children the responsibility of being an ambassador of the school and their faith. Community is also manifested in the welcoming policy for student admission.

3) CATALYST OF SERVICE - "They will know we are Christians by our love" The principal needs to foster within the students and the faculty the value and necessity for service as a constituent of the gospel. This will be reflected in "theory" and practice. The "theory" comes with incorporating within the curriculum an awareness of others - in religion, social studies, current events, study of languages and other cultures, etc. The practice is manifested in how persons reach out to others within the school, within the Christian community and within the political community on a daily basis and in times of need. The Principal will monitor the curriculum, provide opportunities for different types of cultural and service opportunities and foster good relationships through out.

Catholics believe that it takes both faith and good works to live the full Christian life. Therefore all aspects of the school will foster personal as well as socially responsible development. The principal is responsible to initiate, foster and develop the curriculum and learning experiences to accommodate this huge responsibility.

> Maria Ciriello, OP, Ph. D.
> Dean - School of Education
> University of Portland
> Portland, OR
> January 6, 2002

Appendix C

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Appendix D

Ontario Public, Roman Catholic, and Private Elementary Schools and Students

	Number of Elementary School Students	Number of Elementary Schools	Students per School	Number of Full-time Teachers
Ontario	1,504,386	4,653	175	na
Public & Roman Catholic	1,413,786	3,948	381	73,406
Public	943,406	2,568	367	49,873
Roman Catholic	470,380	1,380	341	23,533
French-Language Public and Roman Catholic	68,109	305	223	na
Private	40,828	705	129	na
Private Christian	15,136	258	59	na

Notes: Statistics represent in total 109 English and French-Language Public and Roman Catholic school boards.

Statistics do not include schools, teachers, and students that are home schooled or are enrolled in provincial, First Nations, health care, treatment and correctional facilities.

na not available

Sources: Ontario Ministry of Education. (2000). *Elementary and secondary enrolment quick facts 1998-99*. Toronto: The Ministry.

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Appendix E

Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders
Roles, Areas of Responsibility, and Behaviours

United States Catholic Conference Department of Education and the National Catholic Education Association's *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders* (Ciriello, 1998) principals' roles, responsibilities, and behaviours used and modified with permission. Added text is indicated by *italics*.

Role: Principal as Spiritual Leader

    Area of Responsibility: Faith Development

        F1. Nurtures the faith development of faculty and staff through opportunities for spiritual growth.
        F2. Ensures quality ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* religious instruction of students.
        F3. Provides opportunities for the school community to celebrate faith.
        F4. Supports and fosters consistent practices of Christian service.

    Area of responsibility: Building Christian Community

        B1. Fosters collaboration between the ~~parish(es)~~ *church* and the school.
        B2 Recognizes, respects, and facilitates the role of parents as primary educators.
        B3. Promotes ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* community.

    Area of responsibility: Moral and Ethical Development

        M1. Facilitates the moral developments and maturity of children, youth, and adults.
        M2. Integrates gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies, and life of the school.

    Area of responsibility: History and Philosophy

        H1. Knows the history and purpose of ~~Catholic schools in the United States~~ *Christian schools in Canada.*
        H2. Utilizes church documents and ~~Catholic guidelines and directives~~ *Christian doctrines, guidelines and distinctives.*
        H3. Develops and implements statements of school philosophy and mission that reflect the unique ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* character of the school.

Role: Principal as Educational Leader

    Area of Responsibility: Leadership

        L1. Demonstrates symbolic and cultural leadership skills in developing a school climate reflecting ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* identity.
        L2. Applies a ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* educational vision to the daily activities of the school.
        L3. Promotes healthy staff morale.
        L4. Recognizes and fosters leadership ability among staff members.
        L5. Interprets and uses research to guide action plans.
        L6. Identifies and effects needed change.
        L7. Attends to personal growth and professional development.

Role: Principal as Educational Leader (con't)

Area of Responsibility: Curriculum and Instruction

C1. Demonstrates a knowledge of the content and the methods of religious education.
C2. Knows of the developmental stages of children and youth.
C3. Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences
C4. Provides leadership in curriculum development, especially for the integration of Christian values.
C5. Demonstrates an understanding of a variety of educational and pedagogical skills.
C6. Recognizes and accommodates the special learning needs of children within the inclusive classroom.
C7. Supervises instruction effectively.
C8. Demonstrates an understanding of effective procedures for evaluating the learning of students.
C9. Demonstrates the ability to evaluate the general effectiveness of the learning program of the school.

Role: Principal as Managerial Leader

Area of Responsibility: Personnel Management

P1. Recruits, interviews, selects, and provides an orientation for school staff.
P2. Knows and applies principles of adult learning and motivation.
P3. Knows and applies the skills of organizational management, delegation of responsibilities, and communication skills.
P4. Uses group processes skills effectively with various school committees.
P5. Manages conflicts effectively.
P6. Evaluates staff.

Area of Responsibility: Institutional Management

I1. Provides for an ordinary school environment and promotes student self-discipline.
I2. Understands ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* school governance structures and works effectively with school boards.
I3. Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and the ~~diocesan office~~ *church*.
I4. Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and religious congregation(s).
I5. Knows civil ~~and canon~~ law and *regulations* as it applies to ~~Catholic~~ *Christian* schools.
I6. Understands provincial requirements and government-funded programs.
I7. Understands the usefulness of current technologies.

Area of Responsibility: Finance and Development

D1. Demonstrates skills in planning and managing the school's financial resources toward developing and monitoring an annual budget.
D2. Understands the basic strategies of long-range planning and applies them in developing plans for the school.
D3. Provides for development in the broadest sense, including effective public relations programs (~~Parish[es]~~, church and broader community) and a school marketing program.
D3. Provides for development in the broadest sense, including effective public relations programs (church, and broader community) and a school marketing program.
D4. Seeks resources and support beyond the school ~~(and parish[es])~~ *and church*.

Appendix F

Letters of Permission

Publishing and Promotion Services
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July 20, 2000

Mr. Ian Gordon
Brock University
James A. Gibson Library
St. Catharines, Ontario L2S 3AI

Dear Mr. Gordon:

We are pleased to grant you permission to reprint portions of the *Self-Assessment Survey* instrument, used in association with *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders*, for your dissertation.

The following acknowledgment must be given:

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September 15, 2003

Mr. Ian Gordon
21 Caroline Street
Saint Catharines, ON L2T 3G2
CANADA

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I am pleased to grant you gratis permission to modify and use the USCCB competencies for school principals in your master's thesis.

The acknowledgment given previously should be included in the final thesis as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Sperry
Associate Director
202-541-3098

Appendix G

Brock University Ethics Committee Letter of Permission

At 09:30 AM 3/18/2002 -0500, [name] wrote:
Senate Research Ethics Board Extensions 3205/3035, Room C315
FROM: [name], Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)
TO: Michael Kompf, Education
Ian Gordon
FILE: 01-228, Gordon
DATE: March 18, 2002

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

Complex Roles of Principals in Christian Elementary Schools

The Subcommittee finds that your proposal conforms to the Brock University guidelines set out for ethical research. Your research proposal has been approved through the expedited review process for the period of March 18, 2002 to August 31, 2002.

** Accepted as is. (However, please revise your consent form slightly to include (a) a reminder to participants to keep a copy of the consent form for their records, and (b) a place for the researcher also to provide his signature. The REB does not need to approve these changes.)

Expedited Review of a research proposal (by 2 members of the Research Ethics Board and review by the Chair of the REB) is equivalent to approval provided by the full REB (i.e., it does not mean conditional approval). However, the Chair of the REB must report to the full REB on a monthly basis about any expedited reviews that they have conducted. At such meetings, the full REB could ask for additional changes to the research protocols being used in a particular study. If this were to occur, the decision of the full REB will always over-ride the earlier decision of the two REB members and the Chair.

Please note:

Changes or Modifications to this approved research must be reviewed and approved by the committee. Please complete form REB-03(2001)Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application to Conduct Research with Human Participants and submit it to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.

The Tri-Council. Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit REB-02(2001) Continuing Review/Final Report annually and at the completion of the project. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this is required. All projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, will require this form to be submitted to the Research Ethics Board upon completion of the project.

These forms are available from the Office of Research Services web site:
www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html

DB/dvo

Appendix H

Questionnaire Survey Letter of Introduction

[date]

[Principal's name]
[School or personal address]

Dear [name]:

I am a graduate student presently working toward a Master of Education degree at Brock University. To complete my studies, I am researching the complex roles of Christian elementary school principals. This graduate research project is endorsed by Brock's Faculty of Education and my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf. While participation in this study is completely voluntary we do want to provide as full and accurate a picture as possible. Your contribution is important. Furthermore, individual responses will be considered confidential and no principal or school will be separately identified. The study will simply report general trends, narratives, and areas of agreement or disagreement. A descriptive summary of results will be made available to all participating Niagara Christian schools.

Ontario's elementary schools are experiencing considerable change and we in Christian schools are not exempt. The critical role of principals in Christian schools has also undergone many changes and more are in the offing. What effect these changes will have on school leaders is at present unknown. As the principal of a Christian school you are in an excellent position to reflect on the changing roles as a spiritual, educational, and managerial leaders. You are invited to comment on these roles, areas of responsibilities, and ensuing behaviours by participating in this study. It is anticipated that information gained from your contributions will be helpful to other principals, administrators, board members, and the wider Christian school community as they analyze and develop strategies for the future.

This study includes a survey questionnaire and a focus group meeting. Prospective focus group participants will be selected according to a pre-determined criteria to represent a diverse group of principals based on their length of service, gender, institutional affiliation, and educational background. You will be contacted by [date] if you have been selected to participate in the focus group meeting to be situated at [location] at a mutually convenient time. The focus group will include three current and possibly two former principals/educators/administrators from Niagara Christian schools with the sole purpose of reflecting on questionnaire responses as they pertain to the principals' evolving roles in Christian education. Focus group members will be mailed a second information letter and be asked to complete an additional consent form. Participation in this study by completing the attached questionnaire does not oblige you to participate in the focus group.

Please take a half hour and complete the questionnaire to the best of you ability. Complete the attached questionnaire and consent form and return all documents in the accompanying envelope at your convenience no later than [date].

Feel free to contact me or my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf if you need clarification with the questionnaire or require more information concerning the focus group meeting. You can also contact Brock University's Office of Research Services if you require information about your rights from this third party not directly invested in this study. This study has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228, Gordon.

Your assistance is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ian Gordon (principal investigator)
21 Caroline Street
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encl.

Appendix I

Questionnaire Survey Instrument

Complex Roles of Principals in Christian Elementary Schools

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about your role(s) as a principal of a Christian elementary school. Please set aside approximately half an hour to complete this questionnaire and feel free to provide additional comments where ever you deem appropriate. Do not identify yourself, your school or any other personal affiliations when adding comments or responding to open ended questions. Please remember that you have the right to refuse to answer any questions that deem to be inappropriate, intrusive or offensive. It is important that you complete the entire survey in the sequential order of numbered questions and that you use as much space as required to complete individual questions. Please take your time to complete the questionnaire contributing as much information and insight as possible. Your anonymity, confidentiality and secondary use of data is protected at all times. All completed questionnaires and related data will be destroyed at the completion of this study.

Roles ☞ Responsibilities ☞ Behaviours

Research Study Participant ___

Demographic Information: Principal

1.   Gender   ( ) male   ( ) female

2.   Age   _____ years

3.   Years in Christian education   _____ years

4.   Years as a principal   _____ years

5.   Years at this school   _____ years

6.   Years as principal at this school   _____ years

7.   Highest educational degree   _____

8.   Do you have an Ontario Teaching Certificate ?   ( ) yes   ( ) no

9.   Do you have a current job description ?   ( ) yes   ( ) no

If possible please include a copy of your job description with this completed questionnaire.

10.   Please provide a brief commentary on how you entered Christian education and eventually became a principal:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Demographic Information: School

11.   How long has this school been established ?   _____ years

12.   Grades   ( ) K-8   ( ) other, please indicate   _____

13.   Number of full-time equivalent students   _____

14.   Number of full-time equivalent teachers   _____

15.   Organizational affiliation i.e. ACSI   _____

16.   Religious affiliation   ( ) non-denominational   ( ) other, please explain

_____

17.   Principal's employment status   ( ) full-time   ( ) part-time, please explain why

_____

18.   Principal's teaching status

       ( )   does not teach as part of formal duties, full-time principal

       ( )   teaches part-time, indicate percentage i.e. half-time   _____

       ( )   teaches full-time as well as being principal, please explain

_____

19.　　Does the school have a handbook that describes
　　　　school rules, organization, policies, and practices ?　　　( ) yes　( ) no

Please provide a bibliographic reference for this resource:

Author	Title	

Place of Publication	Issuing agency/Publisher	Year of publication

If possible please include a copy of this handbook with this completed questionnaire.

20.　　Please describe the school's administrative and governance structure (i.e. school board).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

21.   In your opinion, what differentiates your school from other schools in the
        Christian or public education sphere ? What makes your school a
        special place ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please include any school promotional literature or brochures.

Principal's Roles

22.   Please complete and expand upon the following statement

" My role(s) as a principal in a Christian elementary school is to...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Principal's Roles: Importance of Roles

23.   Rank the following roles in order of importance by placing the number 1 beside the role of greatest importance and the number 3 beside the role of least importance. Use each number only once.

_____ Principal as spiritual leader

_____ Principal as educational leader

_____ Principal as managerial leader

Why :_____

_____

_____

Principal's Roles: Time Devoted to Roles

24.   Estimate the amount of time devoted to specific roles averaged over an entire school week. Enter a percentage i.e. 30% beside the appropriate role with the total of all percentages totaling exactly 100%.

_____ % Principal as spiritual leader

_____ % Principal as educational leader

_____ % Principal as managerial leader

100 %   Total

Why: _____

_____

_____

Principals' Roles: Difficulty of Roles

25.   Rank the following roles in order of importance by placing the number 1 beside the role of greatest difficulty and the number 3 beside the role of least difficulty. In other words, which role do you find the most difficult? Difficulty defined as the hardest role to be learned, perceived, or performed. Use each number only once.

_____ Principal as spiritual leader

_____ Principal as educational leader

_____ Principal as managerial leader

Why: _____

_____

_____

Principal's Responsibilities: Importance of Responsibilities

26.   Which responsibilities in your opinion are essential to your role as principal?

Rate each of the following nine responsibilities as you feel are important to principals. (1= least important; 10 = most important; rate each responsibility independently; Each responsibility may be rated with the same or a different number i.e. 6, 6, 8, 5 etc.)

Faith development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Curriculum & Instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Building Christian Community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Personnel Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Moral and Ethical Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Institutional Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
History and Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Finance & Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Principals' Responsibilities: Satisfaction

27.   Which responsibilities in your opinion are the most satisfying to your
       role as principal?

       Rate each of the following nine responsibilities as you feel they are satisfying to
       principals.

       1= least satisfying; 10 = most satisfying; rate each responsibility independently;

       Each responsibility may be rated with the same or a different
       number, i.e. 8, 9, 5, 3, 3, etc.

       Faith development   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Curriculum & Instruction   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Building Christian Community 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Personnel Management   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Moral and Ethical Development 1 2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Institutional Management   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       History and Philosophy   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Finance & Development   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

       Leadership   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Principals' Responsibilities: Time Devoted to Responsibilities

28.   Which responsibilities take the greatest amount of time as principal ?

Rate each of the following nine responsibilities as you feel are time consuming to principals.

1= least time consuming; 10 = most time consuming; rate each responsibility independently;

Each responsibility may be rated with the same or a different number, i.e. 8, 9, 5, 3, 3, etc.

Faith development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Curriculum & Instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Building Christian Community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Personnel Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Moral and Ethical Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Institutional Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
History and Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Finance & Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Principals' Responsibilities: Difficulty of Responsibilities

29.   Which responsibilities are more difficult than others in your role as principal ?

Rate each of the following nine responsibilities as you feel are difficult to principals.

1= least difficult; 10 = most difficult; rate each responsibility independently;

Each responsibility may be rated with the same or a different
number, i.e. 8, 9, 5, 3, 3, etc.

Faith development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Curriculum & Instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Building Christian Community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Personnel Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Moral and Ethical Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Institutional Management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
History and Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Finance & Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Principal as Spiritual Leader: Behaviours

30. As a **spiritual leader** how many times do you exhibit the following behaviours averaged over an entire school year ?

Circle the appropriate response.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always
Nurtures the faith development of faculty and staff through opportunities for spiritual growth.	1	2	3	4	5
Ensures quality Christian religious instruction of students.	1	2	3	4	5
Provides opportunities for the school community to celebrate faith.	1	2	3	4	5
Supports and fosters consistent practices of Christian service.	1	2	3	4	5
Fosters collaboration between the church and the school.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes, respects, and facilitates the role of parents as primary educators.	1	2	3	4	5
Promotes Christian community.	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitates the moral developments and maturity of children, youth and adults.	1	2	3	4	5
Integrates gospel values and Christian ethics into the curriculum, policies and life of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
Knows the history and purpose of Christian schools in Canada.	1	2	3	4	5
Utilizes Christian doctrines, guidelines and distinctive.	1	2	3	4	5
Develops and implements statements of school philosophy and mission that reflect the unique Christian character of the school.	1	2	3	4	5

Principal as Educational Leader: Behaviours

31. As an **educational leader** how many times do you exhibit the following behaviours averaged over an entire school year?

Circle the appropriate response.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always
Demonstrates symbolic and cultural leadership skills in developing a school climate reflecting Christian identity.	1	2	3	4	5
Applies a Christian educational vision to the daily activities of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
Promotes healthy staff morale.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes and fosters leadership ability among staff members.	1	2	3	4	5
Interprets and uses research to guide action plans.	1	2	3	4	5
Identifies and effects needed change.	1	2	3	4	5
Attends to personal growth and professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates a knowledge of the content and the methods of religious education.	1	2	3	4	5
Knows of the developmental stages of children and youth.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes and provides for cultural and religious differences.	1	2	3	4	5
Provides leadership in curriculum development, especially for the integration of Christian values.	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates an understanding of a variety of educational and pedagogical skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes and accommodates the special learning needs of children within the inclusive classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
Supervises instruction effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates an understanding of effective procedures for evaluating the learning of students.	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates the ability to evaluate the general effectiveness of the learning program of the school.	1	2	3	4	5

Principal as Managerial Leader: Behaviours

32. As a **managerial leader** how many times do you exhibit the following behaviours averaged over an entire school year?

Circle the appropriate response.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always
Recruits, interviews, selects, and provides an orientation for school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
Knows and applies principles of adult learning and motivation.	1	2	3	4	5
Knows and applies the skills of organizational management, delegation of responsibilities and communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Uses group processes skills effectively with various school committees.	1	2	3	4	5
Manages conflicts effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluates staff.	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for an ordinary school environment and promotes student self-discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
Understands Christian school governance structures and works effectively with school boards.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and the church.	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes the importance of the relationship between the school and religious congregation(s).	1	2	3	4	5
Knows civil law and regulations as it applies to Christian schools.	1	2	3	4	5
Understands provincial requirements and government-funded programs.	1	2	3	4	5
Understands the usefulness of current technologies.	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates skills in planning and managing the school's financial resources toward developing and monitoring an annual budget.	1	2	3	4	5
Understands the basic strategies of long-range planning and applies them in developing plans for the school.	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for development in the broadest sense, including effective public relations programs (church, and broader community) and a school marketing program.	1	2	3	4	5
Seeks resources and support beyond the school and church.	1	2	3	4	5

33.   Are you interested in receiving a descriptive summary of the questionnaire's results ?

      ( ) yes, please include an appropriate mailing address

_____

      ( ) no thanks

Focus Group

You are invited to take part in an hour long focus group meeting to be conducted at [location] on a mutually convenient date and time to be determined. The focus group may involve four other current or former Niagara Christian school principals with the main purpose of reflecting on questionnaire responses. The focus group should be an interesting exchange of ideas and perspectives. Your input is important. Indicate your willingness to participate by checking the dates and times you are available. You will be contacted to confirm your participation once all questionnaires have been collected and the best possible date and time is determined. Checking off any of the following dates and times does not guarantee that you will be selected, nor does it promise that you will be able to attend if selected.

1.   I am interested in participating in the focus group and am available on each of the following dates and times:

      ( )   [date and time]
      ( )   [date and time]
      ( )   [date and time]
      ( )   [date and time]

      ( )   sorry, not available at any of these dates and times but am still interested in attending the focus group.
      ( )   not interested.

35.   The following former Christian school principal(s)/educators/administrators would be excellent focus group participants. Each of the following may be asked to participate and given the option to decline or withdraw their names:

1. _____
     name   address   phone number

2. _____
     name   address   phone number

Thank you for taking time to participate in this unique research project.

Your assistance is very much appreciated.

      Ian Gordon
      21 Caroline Street
      St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, L2T 3G2
      igordon@brocku.ca

Appendix J

Expert Interview Semistructured Questions

Schools' Characteristics

A majority of Christian schools participating in the study are non-denominational, accept students from a variety of religious backgrounds, have smaller enrolments and staff, and are relatively new to the Region. A minority of schools are denominational or church-based and accept students mainly from affiliated church families.

How might the size or age of a particular Christian school influence principals' roles?

How might principals serving in mainly non-denominational, smaller and relatively newer schools view their roles differently to principals serving in larger denominational or church-based schools?

What are the challenges and opportunities facing contemporary Christian schools?

Principals' Characteristics

A profile of a Niagara Christian elementary school principals participating in the study could be characterized as being male, middle-aged, serving an average of 20 years in Christian education and 10 years as a principal. The minority of principals are employed part-time and assume additional teaching responsibilities. Most principals have Ontario College of Teaching Certificates and a bachelors and/or masters degree. Principals are also noted to spend most of their working lives in Christian education and a significant number exclusively at their current school.

How might male principals view their roles differently from female principals?

Christian elementary school principals' careers from a North American perspective tend to fall into one of two patterns 1) short lived careers characterized by a high burnout and replacement rate and 2) a lengthy career usually situated at one particular school. Niagara Christian school principals' careers in this study generally replicated this pattern. What circumstances contribute to Christian school principals' careers following this pattern?

How might older principals with a longer service record view their roles differently from younger principals?

How might part-time or teaching principals' roles be different than principals who are employed and serve in a full-time capacity?

It is surprising to note that almost all participating Niagara Christian school principals have a post secondary education degree and a Ontario Teaching Certificate. Some principals have a masters degree in education or theology although these degrees are not required for their current position. Why do these principals seem to be overqualified for their positions? Is this typical of the quality of candidates wanting to assume the principalship or a characteristic of those called to this ministry?

Principals' Roles, Responsibilities & Behaviours

What are the roles of Christian school principals?

Do Christian school principals' roles changed over time?

How might Christian school principals' roles change over the length of their career?

How do principals cope with their constantly changing and evolving roles?

Why did principals perceive their role most importantly as spiritual school leaders?

How are the spiritual responsibilities of faith development and building a Christian community both important and satisfying as spiritual leaders

Why did principals devote the greatest amount of time to their role as managerial leaders?

How do the managerial responsibilities of personnel and institutional management take up the greatest portion of time?

Why did principals find their role as educational leaders to be the most difficult?

How do the responsibilities of curriculum and instruction and leadership most difficult for principals as educational leaders?

Appendix K

Expert Interview Letter of Introduction

[date]

[Expert's name]
[Institutional or personal address]

Dear [name]:

I am a graduate student presently working toward a Master of Education degree at Brock University. To complete my studies, I am researching the complex roles of Christian elementary school principals. This study has three parts: a survey of Christian elementary school principals serving in the Niagara Region, a focus group of survey participants, and a series of interviews with mature Christian educators to reflect on survey and focus group results. The survey was delivered in the Spring of 2002 and took almost a year to complete. The proposed focus group meeting was continually postponed until it was finally canceled in the Spring of 2003. Consequently, the third part of this study was modified to include a series of interviews with participants reflecting only on survey results.

Over the past six months I have invited expert Christian educators, researchers and administrators from all across Canada and the United States to participate in the third phase of this study. As an expert [researcher / educator / administrator] you are in an excellent position to reflect on survey results and the changing roles of Christian school principals as spiritual, educational and managerial leaders. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. However, your contribution to this study is important. I have enclosed in this package a list of tentative interview questions for your consultation. These questions are to used as a starting point for your interview.

Interview discussions will be captured to be eventually transcribed by the principal investigator. You will be given the opportunity to review all transcribed and coded data to ensure its accuracy. Please note that all personal, corporate, school and association names will be removed to protect the anonymity of all participants. I will be in contact by [date] to confirm these arrangements. It is anticipated that information gained from your contributions will be helpful to other principals, administrators, board members and the wider Christian school community.

Feel free to contact me or my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf if you need clarification with the design of the interview. You can also contact Brock University's Office of Research Services if you require information about your rights from this third party not directly invested in this study. This study has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228, Gordon.

Please complete and return the enclosed Interview Consent Form. Your assistance is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ian Gordon (principal investigator)
21 Caroline Street
St. Catharines, ON L2T 3G2
905 685 5773
igordon@brocku.ca

Professor Michael Kompf (supervisor)
Faculty of Education
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext.3935
mkompf@brocku.ca

Office of Research Services
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext. 4315
www.brocku.ca/researchservices/

encl.

Appendix L

Expert Interview Consent Form

RE: MASTER OF EDUCATION PROJECT

Complex Roles of Principals in Christian Elementary Schools

Dear [name]:

I agree to participate in this study, which I understand will involve participating in an interview. The main purpose of this study is to study the roles, responsibilities and behaviours of religious school principals serving in Niagara Christian elementary schools. Information gained by this survey is important to the completion of this study and the investigator's Master of Education degree.

By signing this consent form I agree to:

- participate only in the interview portion of the research,

- that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I realize that at any time, and for any reason, I may withdraw from participation in this study without penalty, and that should I wish to do so, it will be sufficient to convey this wish orally to the investigator,

- that I am under no obligation to answer any particular question, or provide any supplementary information,

- that I will be given the opportunity to review all descriptive and transcribed data to ensure its accuracy,

- that all data is considered confidential and that all information will be coded so that my name or school cannot be associated with any data,

- that all data collected by this study belongs to all participants and is considered confidential information not to be copied or released without permission of the principal investigator,

- that only the principal investigator and supervising professor at Brock University will have access to the data, and

- that completed questionnaires, notes, survey and interview data will be retained for two years in a secure location after which it will be destroyed.

I have the right to contact the principle investigator, faculty supervisor and/or Brock University's Office of Research Services for clarification, information and answers to specific questions. This study is endorsed by Brock University's Faculty of Education and has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228, Gordon.

Please sign below and return prior to the formal interview.

_____   _____

(signature)   (date)

Ian Gordon (principal investigator)
21 Caroline Street
St. Catharines, ON L2T 3G2   _____
905 685 5773
igordon@brocku.ca

Professor Michael Kompf (supervisor)
Faculty of Education
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext.3935
mkompf@brocku.ca

Office of Research Services
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext. 4315
www.brocku.ca/researchservices/

Appendix M

Ontario and Niagara Private Elementary School Organizations

School Organization's Name	Number of Ontario Private Schools	Number of Niagara Private Schools	Number of Niagara Private Christian Schools
Total	705	28	17
Montessori schools	107	4	0
Unaffiliated schools	94	5	2
Mennonite schools	80	1	1
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools	74	6	6
Association of Christian Schools International	53	3	3
Jewish schools	37	0	0
Conference of Independent Schools	37	2	0
Ontario Federation of Independent Schools	34	1	1
Islamic schools	30	1	0
First Nations schools	28	0	0
Amish schools	21	0	0
Ontario Accelerated Christian Education Association	21	1	1
International schools in Ontario	16	1	0
League of Canadian Reformed School Societies	14	2	2
Roman Catholic Schools	13	0	0
Waldorf schools	11	0	0
Learning Centre schools	11	0	0
Seventh Day Adventist schools	10	0	0
Rehoboth Christian School Society	3	1	1
Armenian schools	3	0	0

Notes: Sources: Ontario Ministry of Education. (2001). *Private school statistics 2000-01*. Toronto: The Ministry.

Appendix N

Niagara Christian Schools

Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Elementary
School
R. R. # 1
Dunnville, N1A 2W1

Beacon Christian School
300 Scott Street
St. Catharines, L2N 1J3

Calvary Christian School
89 Scott Street
St. Catharines, L2N 1G8

Covenant Christian School
6470 Regional Road
Smithville, L0R 2A0

Dunnville Christian School
R.R. # 1
Dunnville, N1A 2W1

Erie Christian Academy
1700 College Rd
Fort Erie, L2A 5M4

Grand River Academy of Christian Education
29 Claremont St
Thorold, L2V 1R4

Heritage Christian School
2850 Fourth Ave
Jordan Station, L0R 1S0

John Calvin School of Smithville
320 Station Street
Smithville, L0R 2A0

John Knox Memorial Christian School
795 Highway # 8
Fruitland, L8E 5J3

Jordan Christian School
4171 15th St. S.
Jordan, L0R 1S0

Life Christian Academy
310 Scott Street
St. Catharines, L2R 6Z4

Niagara Christian Collegiate
2619 Niagara Blvd
Fort Erie, L2A 5M4

Niagara Community Church School
9527 McLeod Road
Niagara Falls, L2E 6S5

Sonshine Heritage Home Education
R. R. # 2
Dunnville, N1A 2W2

Virgil Old Colony Christian School
1204 Progressive Avenue
Virgil, L0S 1J0

Wellandport Christian School
84008 Wellandport Road
Wellandport, L0R 2J0

Appendix O

Questionnaire Informed Consent Form

RE: MASTER OF EDUCATION PROJECT

Complex Roles of Principals in Christian Elementary Schools

Dear [name]:

I agree to participate in this study, which I understand will involve completing a questionnaire and may involve a focus group meeting. The main purpose of this study is to study the roles, responsibilities and behaviours of principals in Niagara Christian elementary schools. Information gained by this survey is important to the completion of this study and the investigator's Master of Education degree.

By signing this consent form I agree to:

- participate only in the questionnaire portion of the research,

- that up to three participants can expect to be re-contacted to participate in a future focus group meeting,

- that participation in the questionnaire portion of the study does not obligate you to participate in the focus group meeting,

- that focus group participants will be presented with a second information letter and consent form when asked to participate in the focus group meeting,

- that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I realize that at any time, and for any reason, I may withdraw from participation in this study without penalty, and that should I wish to do so, it will be sufficient to convey this wish orally to the investigator,

- that I am under no obligation to answer any particular question, or provide any supplementary information,

- that I will be given the opportunity to review all descriptive and transcribed data to ensure its accuracy,

- that all data is considered confidential and that all information will be coded so that my name or school cannot be associated with any data,

(over)

- that all data collected by this study belongs to all participants and is considered confidential information not to be copied or released without permission of the principle investigator,

- that only the principle investigator and supervising professor at Brock University will have access to the data, and

- that completed questionnaires and focus group data will be retained for two years in a secure location after which it will be destroyed.

I have the right to contact the principle investigator, faculty supervisor and/or Brock University's Office of Research Services for clarification, information, and answers to specific questions. This study is endorsed by Brock University's Faculty of Education and has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228, Gordon.

Please sign below and return with the completed questionnaire and any supporting documentation.

_____

(signature)   (date)

Ian Gordon (principal investigator)
21 Caroline Street
St. Catharines, ON L2T 3G2
905 685 5773
igordon@brocku.ca

_____

Professor Michael Kompf (supervisor)
Faculty of Education
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext.3935
mkompf@brocku.ca

Office of Research Services
Brock University
St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1
905 688 5550 ext. 4315
www.brocku.ca/researchservices/

Appendix P

Questionnaire Revised Letter of Introduction

[date]

[Principal's name]
[School or personal address]

Dear [name]:

I am a graduate student presently working toward a Master of Education degree at Brock University. To complete my studies, I am researching the complex roles of Christian elementary school principals. This graduate research project is endorsed by Brock's Faculty of Education and my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf. While participation in this study is completely voluntary we do want to provide as full and accurate a picture as possible. Your contribution is important. Furthermore, individual responses will be considered confidential and no principal or school will be separately identified. The study will simply report general trends, narratives, and areas of agreement or disagreement. A descriptive summary of results will be made available to all participating Niagara Christian schools.

Ontario's elementary schools are experiencing considerable change and we in Christian schools are not exempt. The critical role of principals in Christian schools has also undergone many changes and more are in the offing. What effect these changes will have on school leaders is at present unknown. As the principal of a Christian school you are in an excellent position to reflect on these changing roles as a spiritual, educational, and managerial leader. You are invited to comment on these roles, areas of responsibilities, and ensuing behaviours by participating in this study. It is anticipated that information gained from your contributions will be helpful to other principals, administrators, board members, and the wider Christian school community as they analyze and develop strategies for the future.

This study includes a survey questionnaire and a focus group meeting. Prospective focus group participants will be selected according to a pre-determined criteria to represent a diverse group of principals based on their length of service, gender, institutional affiliation, and educational background. You will be contacted by [date] if you have been selected to participate in the focus group meeting to be situated at [location] at a mutually convenient time. The focus group will include three current and possibly two former principals/educators/administrators from Niagara Christian schools. Focus group members will be asked a series of questions with the sole purpose of reflecting on survey responses as they pertain to the principals' evolving roles in Christian education. Focus group members will be mailed a second information letter and be asked to complete an additional consent form. Participation in this study by completing the attached questionnaire does not oblige you to participate in the focus group meeting.

Feel free to contact me or my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf if you need clarification with the questionnaire, the consent form or require more information concerning the focus group meeting. You can also contact Brock University's Office of Research Services if you require information about your rights from this third party not directly invested in this study.

This study has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228, Gordon.

Please make note of the following points:

- Set aside at least half an hour to complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability. Use space set aside for each question for additional comments;
- Read and sign the consent form;
- Make copies of any and all documents for your records;
- Place the completed questionnaire, signed consent form, and any supporting documentation in the accompanying envelope to be mailed no later than **[date]**;
- Although all questions are important please take time to reflect and answer question number 22 asking you to complete and expand upon the statement " My role(s) as a principal in a Christian elementary school is to... "
- If you are confused on how to answer any questions do not hesitate to email or phone me at [location] during normal business hours or at [location] at any time;
- Question number 34 asks you to consider dates and times you may be available to participate in the focus group discussion. The focus group is crucial to the success of this study. Your participation would be very much welcomed;
- Question number 35 asks you to consider professional contacts, friends and colleagues that were former Christian school principals, educators, or administrators that would be excellent focus group participants. Your help in this exercise would be very much appreciated and contribute to the success of this study.

Your assistance is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Sincerely,

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encl.

Appendix Q

Survey Thank You Letter

[date]

[Principal's name]
[School or personal address]

Dear [name]:

Thank you for completing my questionnaire investigating the complex roles of principals serving in Niagara Christian elementary schools. Information gained by this survey is important to the completion of this study and partially fulfilling the requirements of my Master of Education degree. Attached is a descriptive summary of survey results. All data collected by this study belongs to all participants and is considered confidential information not to be copied or released without permission of the principle investigator. Please note that no principal or school is separately identified. Please review this summary to ensure its accuracy.

Feel free to contact me, my supervisor Professor Michael Kompf, or Brock's Office of Research Services if you require more information, have any questions or additional comments. This study is endorsed by Brock University's Faculty of Education and has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board as file REB 01-228,Gordon.

Your assistance is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Sincerely,

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Appendix R

Ontario and Niagara Elementary Schools

	Population	Number of Elementary Schools	Number of Elementary Public Schools	Number or Elementary Public French-Language Schools	Number of Elementary Public Catholic Schools	Number of Elementary Catholic French-Language Schools	Number of Elementary Private Schools	Number of Elementary Private Christian Schools
Ontario	11,817,000	4,653	2,568	70	1,380	235	705	258
Niagara	442,323	203	110	6	52	7	28	17
St. Catharines	138,004	57	33	1	13	2	8	3
Welland	50,935	22	10	4	6	2	0	0
Niagara Falls	81,562	35	17	1	12	2	3	1
Thorold	18,953	8	4	0	2	0	2	1
Lincoln	21,170	13	6	0	3	0	4	3
Pelham	15,895	6	4	0	2	0	0	0
West Lincoln	12,192	7	3	0	1	0	2	2
Grimsby	21,382	8	6	0	2	0	0	0
Niagara-on-the-Lake	14,065	8	5	0	2	0	1	1
Fort Erie	29,403	13	8	0	4	0	1	2
Port Colborne	19,003	10	6	0	3	1	0	0
Wainfleet	6,567	5	2	0	1	0	2	0
Dunnville	13,192	11	6	0	1	0	4	3

Notes: Sources: Ontario Ministry of Education. (2002). *Elementary and secondary school statistics 2000-01*. Toronto: The Ministry.
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2001). *Private school statistics 2000-01*. Toronto: The Ministry.
Census of Canada 2001. (2002). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.